

HISTORY  
of  
GREENE COUNTY  
ARKANSAS  

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# HISTORY *of* GREENE COUNTY ARKANSAS

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By

VIVIAN HANSBROUGH  
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PREFACE

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In the spring of 1939, I was called upon to complete the term for a teacher in Paragould High School. At the end of one week, we had completed the few remaining pages of the textbook. That left me with seventy lively youngsters in two classes—no textbook—and six weeks to go. That was the opportunity to find out something about Greene County history. Those boys and girls scouted all over town, interviewing old people, and brought to class many old newspapers and a history of northeast Arkansas, written in 1889. Professor C. E. Richardson, though stooped and feeble, sat on his porch during the noon hour, and told the students about early days in the county. Later, he gave me two notebooks of manuscript which had taken years to assemble. Since that time, I have continued to add to the material that the students had found.

About two years ago, I started in earnest to assemble a book on the history of Greene County. So many people have helped that it would be impossible to name them. As much as I would like to give them individual mention, I hesitate to name some, for fear of omitting others. Suffice it to say that the book could never have been completed without the help of hundreds of gracious citizens who have given unsparingly of their time and information. To each of these, I extend my sincere thanks, with the hope that I have done justice to our great county.

VIVIAN HANSBROUGH.

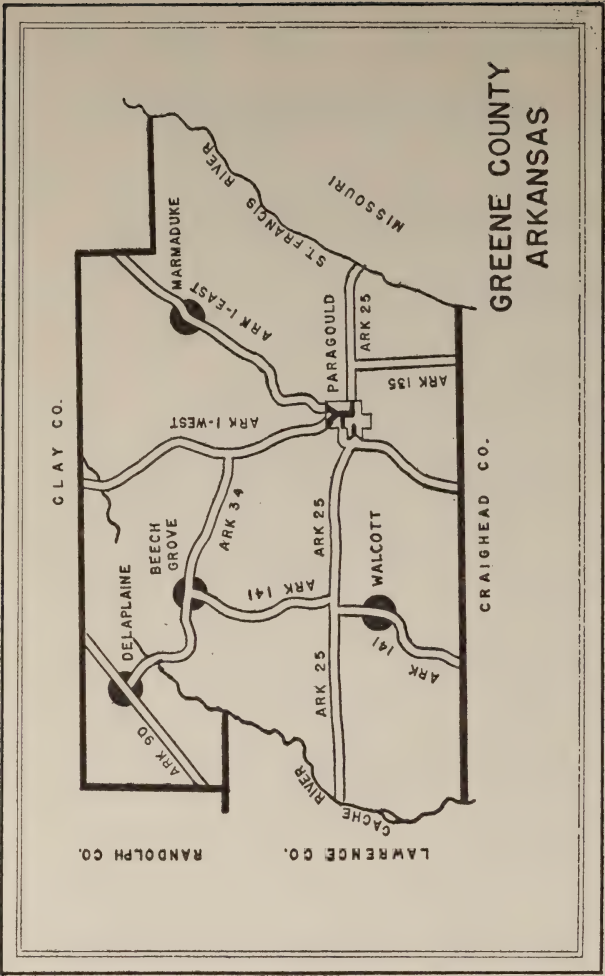
September 10, 1946.

IN MEMORY OF THE PAST  
DEDICATED TO THE PRESENT  
INTRUSTED TO THE FUTURE



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter                            | Page |
|------------------------------------|------|
| I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY - -   | 1    |
| II. PIONEER DAYS - - - - -         | 22   |
| III. PERIOD OF GROWTH - - - - -    | 42   |
| IV. HISTORY OF PARAGOULD - - - - - | 54   |
| V. FOUR WARS - - - - -             | 82   |
| VI. CHURCHES - - - - -             | 90   |
| VII. SCHOOLS - - - - -             | 108  |
| VIII. NEWSPAPERS - - - - -         | 130  |
| IX. BANKS - - - - -                | 141  |
| X. SOME REMINISCENCES - - - - -    | 152  |
| XI. BIOGRAPHY - - - - -            | 176  |



HIGHWAYS OF GREENE COUNTY



# CHAPTER I

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

### LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

GREENE COUNTY, ARKANSAS, lies in the northeastern part of the State, in latitude  $36^{\circ} 37'$  North, and longitude  $90^{\circ}$  West from Greenwich, England. It is bounded on the north by Clay County; on the east by the St. Francis River, which separates it from Dunklin County, Missouri; on the south by Craighead County; and on the west by Lawrence and Randolph Counties.

Greene County is more like the State in shape than any of the other seventy-four counties. Both have straight parallel north and south lines. Both are bordered on the east by rivers. Both have squares off the northeast corners, and both have irregular river lines on the southwest side.

The average length of the county is twenty-seven miles, and the width is twenty miles. The area is 561 square miles, or slightly under the average sized county. The State Constitution, adopted in 1874, declares that no new county shall be created with less than six hundred square miles of territory, and that no old county shall be reduced below that area.<sup>1</sup> By act of the General Assembly of 1895, a square was taken from the northeast corner of the county, and given to Clay County. The act has stood, even though it was uncon-

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<sup>1</sup> *Constitution of the State of Arkansas*, Article XIII, Section 1.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

stitutional, in that it reduced an old county below the area of six hundred square miles.

The boundaries stipulated in the Act creating the county on November 5, 1833, were:

All that portion of the county of Lawrence lying east of a line beginning where the southern boundary line of the said county of Lawrence crosses the River Cache, thence up the middle of the main channel of the said Cache, to a place known as the three forks of the Cache, thence due north course till it intersects the constitutional line dividing the state of Missouri from the territory of Arkansas, be and the same is hereby erected into a separate and distinct county to be called the county of Green.

It will be noted that in this act the name is spelled without the final "e." Since the county is supposed to have been named for Nathaniel Greene, an American general in the Revolutionary War, the name has subsequently been spelled "Greene."

The county of Clayton was created by an act of March 24, 1873, and was formed out of territory taken from Greene and Randolph Counties. The name of Clayton, in honor of Senator John M. Clayton, was changed to Clay, in honor of Henry Clay of Kentucky, by an act of the legislature of 1875.

The boundaries of Greene County, after the formation of Clay County, became as follows:

Commencing where the line between Sections 21 and 28, Township 19, Range 9, intersects the middle of the main channel of the St. Francis River; thence down the middle of the main channel of that river to the line between



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

Townships 15 and 16; thence west on the township line to the Cache River; thence up said river, with its meanderings, to the line between Townships 17 and 18; thence west on the township line to the line between Ranges 2 and 3; thence north on the range line to the northwest corner of Section 30, Township 19, Range 3; thence east on the section lines, and on the county line, to the place of beginning.<sup>1</sup>

Crowley's Ridge extends in a southwesterly direction through Greene County, with a width varying from five to ten miles, and slopes gently on either side to the level of the bottom lands. From Crowley's Ridge the waters flow through several small streams in a southeasterly direction and empty into the St. Francis River. West of the Ridge, the waters course through small streams in a southwesterly direction, emptying into Cache River. Thus all that portion of the county lying between these rivers is drained. The part northwest of Cache River is drained through the streams tributary to Cache and Black Rivers.

The average elevation of the county is 293 feet. The soil is alluvial in the bottoms, clay loam on Crowley's Ridge, and gray sandy soil on the western slopes. Principal crops are corn, cotton, rice, alfalfa, clover, and potatoes. Greene County is one of the leading counties of the State in the production of honey. The ridge lands are especially adapted to fruit and truck growing, stock raising, dairying, and timber production.

Greene County is divided into twenty-four political townships, designated by name as: Blue Cane,

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 113.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Breckenridge, Bryan, Cache, Clark, Collier, Crowley, Evening Shade, Friendship, Hopewell, Hurricane, Jones, Hays, Lake, Mainshore, Poland, Reynolds, Salem, St. Francis, Shady Grove, Spring Grove, Sugar Creek, Union, Walnut Corner.

There are three incorporated towns in the county, namely: Paragould, Marmaduke, and Delaplaine. In addition, there are a number of villages and settlements, including Bard, Bethel, Bertig, Brighton, Beech Grove, Gainesville, Halliday, Fontaine, Hooker, Lafe, Light, Lorado, Stanford, Stonewall, and Walcott.

Population statistics of both Greene County and the city of Paragould show that growth has been slow but consistent, with no unusual spurts or declines. Population at the end of each decade since 1840 was listed as follows:

|           | Greene County | Paragould |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| 1850..... | 2,593         | -----     |
| 1860..... | 5,652         | -----     |
| 1870..... | 7,573         | -----     |
| 1880..... | 7,480         | -----     |
| 1890..... | 12,908        | 1,666     |
| 1900..... | 16,979        | 3,324     |
| 1910..... | 23,852        | 5,248     |
| 1920..... | 26,105        | 6,306     |
| 1930..... | 26,127        | 5,966     |
| 1940..... | 30,204        | 7,454     |

An old issue of the *Arkansas Gazette*, published in 1879, publicized the resources of Greene County:

We are in receipt of a new paper, the *Democratic Press*, published at Gainesville, Greene County, by Messrs. M. V. Camp and Frank M. Daulton. The issue before us is neatly gotten up and full of spicy, interesting reading. We wish the *Press* success. We clip from the *Press* the following article upon the resources of Greene, the truth of which we can vouch for, having traveled through the county:



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

Greene County, situated between the St. Francis and Black Rivers, is one of the richest counties in natural resources in northeast Arkansas, being well watered, well timbered, and lands unsurpassed in the Mississippi valley for fertility of soil and variety of products. Corn, cotton, wheat, oats, rye, barley, Irish and sweet potatoes, clover, timothy, red-top, and a large variety of vegetables yield a bountiful reward to labor. The ridge lands are clayey and well adapted to the growing of a great variety of grains, while the bottom lands are sandy and very productive of cotton, corn and potatoes. The bottoms furnish excellent pasturage all the year for cattle, sheep and horses, and beef cattle taken off the range and shipped to St. Louis compare favorably in market with those from the rich meadows of Illinois and Kentucky. The forests are densely studded with pine, poplar, beech, ash, cypress, gum, hickory, red oak, black oak, and white oak. The latter variety of oak and the poplar grow to unusual sizes. The lakes and rivers abound in a variety of game fish, such as perch, trout, bass, carp, etc. Gainesville, an old-fashioned town of about three hundred inhabitants, is the county site, which has recently taken new life, and on every street may be seen new structures going up, either residences or business houses, while many more will be built in the near future. Large tracts of valuable land, owned by individuals and the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad Company, can be bought upon easy terms and long payments.<sup>1</sup>

## OLD ASSESSMENT BOOK

The oldest County record book in the Greene County Court House is a tax assessment book for

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<sup>1</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, June 20, 1879, p. 4.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

1866. This was evidently kept in private possession, or it would not have survived the fires that destroyed three court houses after that date.

R. H. Gardner, County Clerk, wrote a letter of transmittal in the back of the book, dated May 15, 1866, and addressed to the Collector of Greene County. This letter set forth the rates of taxation as follows:

1 per centum per hundred dollars for the State Tax;

1 per cent per hundred for Road Tax;

$\frac{1}{2}$  of one per centum per hundred dollars, together with the sum of one dollar from each and every male inhabitant over the age of twenty-one years and under sixty years of age for the County Tax.

The assessment book listed land by section, township, range, number of acres and valuation. The recapitulation listed total acreage as 298,808 acres; total land value as \$337,878; total number of town lots, 48; value of town lots, \$5,620; number of saw mills, 2; value of saw mills, \$1,750; number of tan yards,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ; value of tan yards, \$1,300; number of distilleries, 3; value of distilleries, \$245; number of pleasure carriages, 11; value of pleasure carriages, \$635; number of horses and mares over two years old, 987; value of horses and mares over two years old, \$66,343; number of mules over two years old, 186; value of mules over two years old, \$13,083; number of Jacks and Jennies over two years old, 11; value of Jacks and Jennies over two years old, \$585; number of neat cattle over two years old, 3,109; value of cattle, \$44,844; value of merchandise of merchants,

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

\$2,713; money loaned at interest, \$625; money on hand amounting to more than \$200 per household, \$495; money invested in country products for sale, \$10; capital in steamboats, ferries, and toll-bridges, \$165; value of gold watches and jewelry, \$225; total value of taxable property, \$476,518; State tax, \$5,281.89; Road tax, \$3,736.29; County tax, \$3,355.83.

It must be borne in mind that this was the original Greene County, including a large tract which was subtracted in 1873 when Clay County was formed.

## GREENE COUNTY COURT HOUSES

### *First Court*

The first court on Crowley's Ridge convened in 1833 under the shade of twin oaks and near a spring on the Crowley plantation. Benjamin Crowley entertained the visitors in his home. He and Reverend Isaac Brookfield led in a movement to form a new county, which was to be taken from the eastern end of Lawrence County, and was to be named for General Nathaniel Greene. The bill for the formation of the county was drawn up early in the fall of 1833 and was to become effective on November 1st next. Due to an unforeseen difficulty, the bill was not passed until November 5, 1833, and the election of officers was delayed for one year.

### *Paris*

Commissioners were appointed to locate a permanent county seat, and they selected a vacant hewed log house about eighteen feet square in an obscure village



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

called Paris, about five miles northeast of the present town of Gainesville. Greene County then included what is now Clay County, and Paris was not far from the center of the county. Paris contained a lumber mill, a store, and two or more small houses, but the accommodations for entertaining a session of court were extremely meager. Yet it held the courts from 1835 to 1848, because there was at that time no better place for holding court in the new county.<sup>1</sup>

There is a difference of opinion as to the actual location of Paris. The Goodspeed history, quoted above, says it was "five miles northeast of the present town of Gainesville." The Meredith family and many old citizens claim that it was eight miles north and one and one-half miles east of the present town of Paragould, on the northwest quarter of Section 20, Township 18, Range 6, on land that Samuel B. Meredith entered from the government in 1839.

### Gainesville

In 1848, the question of relocating the county seat was agitated, and of the different points competing for it, the one where Gainesville is situated *gained* the location, hence the name Gainesville.

The few buildings in Paris fell in disuse, and there is nothing now to mark the spot where court was once held.

The settlement at Gainesville had been established about the year 1840. In 1846 it contained a log court house, two store buildings, and five dwelling houses, all log except one frame house sided up with clap-

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 117.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

boards. The log court house was soon abandoned, and in its stead a three-story frame court house, about thirty feet square, was constructed. The first floor of this building was occupied with the county offices, the second with the court room, and the third with a Masonic hall. The building, with a portion of the records, was burned in 1874. A store room was then rented for a court house, and soon thereafter, in the same year, it also burned, with the balance of the records. These buildings were supposed to have been set afire by certain parties, that the records, noting their rather questionable conduct, might be destroyed.

The next court house was another store room, which, with all accumulated records, was destroyed by fire on the night of March 5, 1876, presumably by an incendiary resting under indictment for crime.<sup>1</sup>

The County Court was prompt in making temporary provisions, as indicated by the Greene County Court Record of April 4, 1876:

On this day the Court contracts with J. R. & R. Jackson for the central upper room in the Store House belonging to them for a Clerk's office and agrees to pay for the same rent at the rate of ten dollars per month so long as the same may be occupied, beginning from the 3rd day of April, 1876.<sup>2</sup>

During the same term of Court, William G. Nutt was named Building Commissioner and was authorized to proceed with the erection of a temporary court house.

Said Commissioner is ordered to proceed forthwith to erect or cause to be erected on the

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 1, p. 12.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

South West Corner of the Public Square a Temporary Court House 24 by 36 feet in size and 10 feet high to be covered with three feet boards—One double door in north end and smaller door in rear—One window in each side and two in front end and one in rear—Said building to be a box house to be built in a strong substantial manner and ceiled overhead without dressing the lumber except the door and window shutters.<sup>1</sup>

The new building, constructed at a total cost of \$475.00, was ready for occupancy by January 1, 1877.<sup>2</sup>

Concern over the safety of the records resulted in the purchase of a fireproof safe at a cost of \$905.00.<sup>3</sup> This safe was shipped from St. Louis to Delaplaine, and James R. Jackson was paid \$200.00 for hauling it from Delaplaine to Gainesville in July, 1877.<sup>4</sup> This safe is now in the Circuit Clerk's office in Paragould, in good condition after serving the County for sixty-nine years.

### *Paragould*

Paragould was incorporated as a town on March 3, 1883.<sup>5</sup> Because of the rapid growth of the new town, a petition was circulated, seeking the removal of the county seat from Gainesville to Paragould. After a heated controversy, the election held the first Monday in September, 1884, resulted in a count of 943 votes in favor of removal and 737 votes against removal. Accordingly, the County Court on October 6, 1884, ordered the transfer of all movable effects to Paragould

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 1, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 2, p. 176.



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

within the following week.<sup>1</sup> There is a legend that W. J. McDonald moved the County safe and all records from Gainesville to Paragould in an oxcart.

For a short time, the County rented "a house known as the Ben Wood house situated at West end of Main Street" in Paragould.<sup>2</sup>

On October 30, 1884, the County Court appointed a building committee composed of Charles D. Pruett, W. H. Jones, and E. S. Bray. Bids were to be secured for the erection of a temporary court house to meet the following specifications:

The room shall be 24 feet by 90 feet—12 feet from the floor to the ceiling—framed, weatherboarded and neatly ceiled, floor to be dressed, tongued and grooved, all to be of first class lumber, and put together in a workmanlike manner, roof to be of first class shingles. Said room is to be divided into smaller rooms as follows: Court room proper shall be 24 feet by 60 feet—Petit Jury room, back of, and adjoining the Court room to be 15 feet by 24 feet—Grand Jury room to be in the back part of house and adjoining Petit Jury room, to be 15 feet by 24 feet—two windows and double doors to be in front, of sufficient size, and two windows in the sides of front room at the back on either side, one door at back end of Court room, to one side, entering into the Petit Jury room—and one door in back end of building.<sup>3</sup>

This temporary Court House was built by J. H. Bryant for \$1,194.00, on a lot east of Court Square, between the present locations of the Cities Service Sta-

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 2, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 371.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

tion and the Masonic Hall.<sup>1</sup> An additional \$158.00 was allowed to J. E. Williford for painting.<sup>2</sup> Tradition states that R. H. Gardner, the county court clerk, carried the records home with him at the close of each day and back again in the morning.



GREENE COUNTY COURT HOUSE

On August 9, 1887, a building committee, consisting of Eli S. Bray, A. P. Mack, and W. H. Jones, was appointed and authorized to draw plans for a brick court house.<sup>3</sup> The contract was let on October 5, 1887, to W. F. Boon and S. R. McGinnis, for

<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 2, p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 3, p. 146.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

\$14,700.00.<sup>1</sup> Because citizens had subscribed \$700.00 for the purchase of a clock, the County paid an additional \$300.00 for changing the plans for the dome and installing the clock.<sup>2</sup> On April 3, 1888, the commissioners reported that the court house was completed.

"Old Court Square" in Gainesville was sold in April, 1888, half to Thos. W. Crawford for \$80.00 and the other half to G. W. Johnson for \$52.00.<sup>3</sup> The lot in Paragould on which the temporary court house stood was sold in July, 1890, to H. S. Trice for \$335.00.<sup>4</sup>

## COUNTY JAIL

Although the people of Greene County are generally peaceful and law-abiding, it has always been necessary to maintain a jail for the detention of a few lawbreakers. Court records indicate that with each change of county seat, a jail was provided. The present County Jail was built in 1887 by the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company of St. Louis, Missouri, for seven thousand dollars. Building commissioners were J. A. Dickson, Eli S. Bray, and W. J. McDonald.<sup>5</sup>

There have been three legal hangings in Paragould, but it is a credit to Greene County that each of the victims was brought here on change of venue from another county. On October 30, 1885, William H. Harper was executed, following his trial for a murder committed in Randolph County.<sup>6</sup> In 1903, two citi-

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 2, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 3, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 450.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> *Circuit Court Record, Greene County*, Book 2, p. 623.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

zens of Clay County were brought to Greene County for trial, convicted of murder, and hanged.<sup>1</sup> Their names are not mentioned here, in deference to relatives who reside in this vicinity. Under present humanitarian laws, the unpleasant duty of capital punishment cannot fall upon county officials.

### COUNTY POOR FARM

It is true in our time, as in Bible times, that "the poor we have always with us." Early county records contain numerous allotments for the care of paupers, of which this entry in 1877 is a sample:

On this day it is ordered by the Court that Richard E. Bearden be allowed the sum of Eight & 50/100 Dollars per month from this date for keeping Lucy Lumpkin a pauper for the remainder of the year 1877, for which warrants may issue quarterly on the Pauper fund, and that said Bearden enter into sufficient bond conditioned for the faithful discharge of his duties as keeper of said pauper.<sup>2</sup>

In order to provide systematic and economical care for the poor, the County purchased in 1891 an eighty-five acre farm, three miles north of Paragould, from T. R. Willcockson, for seventeen hundred and fifty dollars.<sup>3</sup> Repairs were made on the existing buildings, and other improvements have been made from time to time. Although attendants are hired for a part of the work, the inmates are expected to assist in so far as they are able.

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<sup>1</sup> *Circuit Court Record, Greene County*, Book 6, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 1, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 3, p. 555.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

### CROWLEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK

Crowley's Ridge State Park is on the extreme western slope of Crowley's Ridge, near Walcott, in the western portion of Greene County. When the park was opened in 1934, it included 232.5 acres, donated for the purpose. In 1935, the purchase of 87 acres brought the total to 319.5 acres. The park, with all of its improvements, was valued at \$205,000 in 1936.<sup>1</sup>

The site occupies the former plantation of Benjamin Crowley, whose family was the first to settle in this section of the country. A marker in the park bears this legend:

The first court on Crowley's Ridge was held under the shade of twin oaks. This tree is the only one remaining. The County also was organized here (with the aid of a jug of whiskey which the sheriff kept in the spring between the trees). Benjamin Crowley and the Reverend Isaac Brookfield took the lead in the formation of the new county, naming it after General Nathaniel Greene. They prepared the bill for the territorial assembly which was passed November 5, 1833, and became effective on November 1, 1834. The Reverend Brookfield was sent to the Louisiana Purchase from the East by Bishop Asbury as a Methodist missionary. He temporarily laid aside his missionary work to become the first Greene County Judge.

The park contains an amphitheater with seating capacity of 2,300 people, a bathhouse, a two-story pavillion having concession rooms and a dance hall, a stone monument marking Benjamin Crowley's grave, two four-acre picnic areas, four miles of main roads,

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<sup>1</sup> *Progress Report of the Arkansas State Planning Board, 1936*, p. 64.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

and five miles of foot trails. All of these improvements were made by C. C. C. enrollees.

The central feature of the park is a lake covering three and one-half acres, created by the construction of a dam three hundred feet in length, and requiring 11,000 cubic yards of earth. The lake is fed by a large spring which attracted the original settlers, and by numerous surface springs.<sup>1</sup>

Several thousand people use this park for swimming and picknicking during the summer months.

### COUNTY OFFICIALS

Following is a list of the names of the county officers of Greene County from its organization to the present, together with the term of service of each:

*Judges:* I. Brookfield, 1833-35; W. Hanes, 1835-36; George Daniel, 1836-38; L. Thompson, 1838-40; J. M. Cooper, 1840-42; H. Powell, 1842-44; N. Murphree, 1844-46; J. M. Cooper, 1846-48; C. G. Steele, 1848-50; H. T. Allen, 1850-52; J. Dellingner, 1852-54; H. T. Allen, 1854-60; T. Clark, 1860-64; J. J. Wood, 1864-66; H. T. Allen, 1866-68; A. Seagroves, 1868-72; David Thorn, 1874-76; J. P. Culver, 1876-78; J. McDaniel, 1878-80; M. C. Gramling, 1880-82; J. O'Steen, 1882-88; W. C. Jones, 1888-92; G. H. Faulkner, 1892-96; S. R. Willcockson, 1896-98; W. C. Jones, 1898-1902; John O'Steen, 1902-06; Jason L. Light, 1906-12; A. D. Jackson, 1912-14; Jason L. Light, 1914-16; W. A.

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<sup>1</sup> *History and Development of Crowley's Ridge State Park*, a scrapbook compiled by the Park personnel in 1935. This scrapbook is now kept at the Chamber of Commerce, in Paragould.



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

Branch, 1916-20; John C. Honey, 1920-28; Geo. H. Rogers, 1928-32; P. C. Ritter, 1932-34; Arthur Pillow, 1934-38; G. S. Self, 1938-42; J. A. Walden, 1942-46.

*Circuit Clerks:* L. Thompson, 1833-36; G. L. Martin, 1836-38; H. L. Holt, to November, 1838; J. L. Atchison, 1838-44; H. L. Evans, 1844-46; H. Powell, 1846-50; M. T. C. Lumpkins, 1850-54; J. W. McFarland, 1854-56; L. B. McNeil, 1856-58; H. W. Glasscock, 1858-64; R. H. Gardner, 1864-68; E. R. Seeley, 1868-72; D. B. Warren, 1872-82; R. H. Gardner, 1882-88; T. B. Kitchens, 1888-92; J. R. Miller, 1892-94; G. O. Light, 1894-98; G. T. Breckenridge, 1898-1902; G. O. Light, 1902-06; J. M. Futrell 1906-09; J. P. Cathey, 1910-14; Fred Watson, 1914-18; John Simpson, 1918-22; Chas. W. Wood, 1922-26; Edgar Seay, 1926-30; Earl Beaton, 1930-34; Donald Cox, 1934-38; Paul McLerkin, 1938-42; Curtis Cruse, 1942-46.

*County Clerks:* Combined with Circuit Clerk until 1902; A. D. Gardner, 1902-04; C. W. Highfill, 1904-08; J. A. Edwards, 1908-12; G. H. Powell, 1912-16; E. E. Cox, 1916-20; Geo. H. Rogers, 1920-24; Alfred Walden, 1924-28; Harvey McLerkin, 1928-32; Hall Faulkner, 1932-36; J. Sam Thompson, 1936-40; Charlie Wood, 1940-44; Geo. C. Barnhill, 1944-46.

*Treasurers:* James Ratchford, 1836-38; H. N. Reynolds, 1840-42; G. W. Harley, 1842-44; M. Carter, 1844-46; J. W. Poole, 1846-52; C. G. Jones, 1852-54; W. Meredith, 1854-56; J. Payne, 1856-58; T. H. Wyse, 1858-62; C. Wall, 1862-64; M. C.

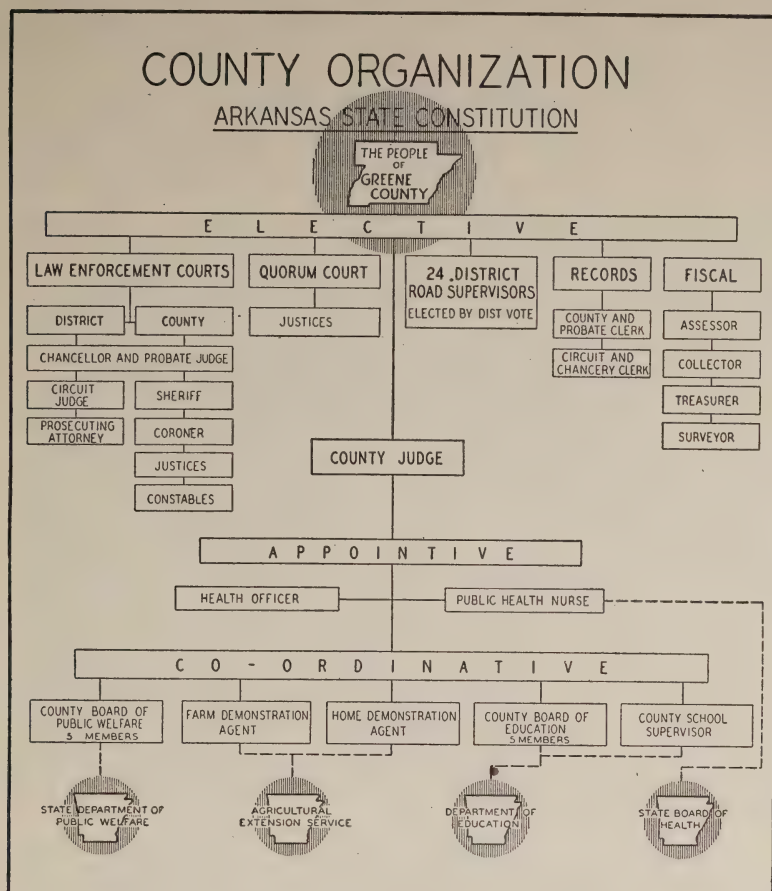
## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Gramling, 1864-66; Alex. Wood, 1866-68; Sam Newberry, 1868-72; R. Jackson, 1872-76; H. C. Swindle, 1876-78; G. W. Stevenson, (R. Jackson on resignation of Stevenson), 1878-80; R. Jackson, 1880-84; J. N. Johnson, 1884-86; H. S. Trice, 1888-92; T. W. Crawford, 1892-96; John Rosson, 1896-1900; W. T. Stedman, 1900-04; J. M. Huddleston, 1904-06; J. C. Honey, 1906-10; W. C. Thompson, 1910-14; T. H. Lloyd, 1914-18; W. T. Williford, 1918-22; W. B. Fullerton, 1922-26; Bob McCoy, 1926-30; Irvin S. Horne, 1930-34; Harvey Farrell, 1934-38; Jim Fitzgerald, 1938-42; Louis Bierbaum, 1942-46.

*Sheriffs:* James Brown, 1833-34; Charles Robertson, 1834-36; J. Stotts, 1836-38; J. Clark, 1838-44; J. R. Ragsdale, 1844-46; A. F. Puryer, 1846-48; J. Clark, 1848-50; William Pevehouse, 1850-52; W. M. Peebles, 1852-58; F. S. White, 1858-62; A. Eubanks, 1862-64; F. S. White, 1864-68; M. Wright, 1868-72; M. C. Gramling, 1872-74; J. P. Willcockson, 1874-76; J. A. Owen, 1876-77; F. S. White, 1877-80; T. R. Willcockson, 1880-84; J. M. Highfill, 1884-86; T. R. Willcockson, 1886-90; J. R. Thompson, 1890-94; Joe A. Thompson, 1894-96; John R. Thompson, 1896-1900; A. D. Grayson, 1900-04; E. E. Penney, 1904-08; R. L. Camp, 1908-10; J. E. Lawson, 1910-12; J. A. Grooms, 1912-16; Robt. L. Elmore, 1916-20; C. P. Stepp, 1920-24; John Farrell, 1924-28; B. L. Waldrum, 1928-32; W. T. Crowley, 1932-36; Robert Brashers, 1936-40; Paul Bratton, 1940-42; Fred Gray, 1942-44; Pat Robinson, 1944-46.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

**Tax Collectors:** Combined with Sheriff until 1904; A. S. Snowden, 1904-08; T. E. Haley, 1908-12; A. M. Wood, 1912-16; Chris Shane, 1916-18; R. H. Partain, 1918-22; Joe Bond, 1922-26; Ike Willcockson, 1926-30; Notra Harrington, 1930-34; Lawrence Yopp, 1934-38; Barney Elmore, 1938-42; Rupert Blalock, 1942-46.



ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
 GREENE COUNTY, ARKANSAS



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

*Assessors:* R. H. Gardner, 1859-62; T. C. Murphy, 1862-64; H. W. Glasscock, 1864-66; M. C. Gramling, 1866-68; D. J. Edwards, 1868-70; P. G. Straughn, 1870-72; W. F. Clements, 1872-74; W. S. Ledbetter, 1874-76; J. Huckabay, 1876-78; J. F. Lytle, 1878-80; P. G. Light, 1880-84; J. R. Thompson, 1884-88; E. L. Bobbitt, 1888-92; W. D. Hester, 1892-96; Joe G. Faulkner, 1896-1900; H. N. Highfill, 1900-04; W. G. Ryan, 1904-08; E. B. Breckenridge, 1908-12; Robert Partain, 1912-16; Marion Sims, 1916-20; A. V. Roberts, 1920-22; Virgil Roberts, 1922-24; Earl Bibb, 1924-28; Roy Crews, 1928-32; Ray V. Bowlin, 1932-36; Moses Atwood, 1936-40; J. C. Gramling, 1940-44; Everett Rogers, 1944-46.

*Surveyors:* G. Hall, 1833-36; William Hatch, 1838-40; J. J. Johnson, 1840-42; J. B. B. Moore, 1842-44; James Mitchell, 1844-56; E. M. Allen, 1856-58; W. C. Reyburn, 1858-60; R. G. McLeskey, 1860-62; J. P. Harris, 1862-64; R. C. Mack, 1864-66; L. M. Wilson, 1866-68; J. Seeley, 1870-72; R. H. Gardner, 1872-82; O. S. Newsom, 1882-88; Len Meriwether, 1888-90; R. H. Gardner, 1890-92; F. P. White, 1892-96; W. T. Crowley, 1896-1900; O. S. Newsom, 1900-02; C. D. Swindle, 1902-04; C. E. Waddell, 1904-12; A. H. Glasscock, 1912-14; W. W. Barron, 1914-18; R. E. L. Stricklin, 1918-34; John Heagler, 1934-38; Clifford Willcockson, 1938-40; J. E. Garrett, 1940-42.

*Coroners:* J. Sutfin, 1833-35; J. Fowler, 1835-36; John Anderson, 1838-42; P. K. Lester, 1842-44; J. Lawrence, 1844-46; J. Hunt, 1846-48; W. H. Mack, 1848-50; R. W. Dorsey, 1850-54; J. S. Hibbs,

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY

1854-56; M. McDaniel, 1856-58; A. P. Bobo, 1858-60; H. B. Wright, 1860-64; J. R. Gentry, 1865-66; H. Jackson, 1866-68; L. Steadman, 1868-72; J. H. Dudley, 1872-74; E. Daniels, 1874-76; J. A. Little, 1876-78; W. M. McKay, 1878-80; J. W. Hardy, 1880-82; J. R. Gross, 1882-84; V. Looney, 1884-86; J. M. Hammond, 1886-88; W. C. Terrell, 1888-90; J. H. Moon, 1890-92; J. M. W. Agee, 1892-96; Dee McHaney, 1896-1900; J. B. Norwood, 1900-04; John M. Davis, 1904-08; A. W. Walk, 1908-10; Dee McHaney, 1912-16; Elmer Walker, 1916-20; Dee McHaney, 1920-30; Walter McHaney, 1930-34; Ray Little, 1934-45; W. E. Newberry, 1945-46.



GRAND JURY, OCTOBER, 1889

Top row, left to right: S. H. Weatherly, John M. Lloyd, J. E. Newberry, M. Malin, J. A. Foster, George Gates, H. L. Bramlett (Deputy Sheriff).

Middle row: J. D. Block (Prosecuting Attorney), John Dan McDaniel (Jury Custodian), Z. M. Bond, John J. Burton, W. S. Coffman, J. T. Bozeman, T. R. Willcockson (Sheriff).

Bottom row: J. F. Cardwell, W. T. Hale, H. B. Wright, J. M. Highfill, W. T. Allison, A. B. Hays.

## CHAPTER II

### PIONEER DAYS

#### EARLY SETTLERS

GREENE COUNTY was settled by people from the states immediately east of the territory, and from adjoining counties of Arkansas. The pioneers came from Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, and from the Carolinas. Later additions came from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri—Scotch-Irish, German, Saxon, and the stalwart citizenry that springs from a mixture of the best races of mankind.

People have always moved westward along parallel lines, possibly to keep in the same climate, and in response to the decree of history: "Westward the course of Empire takes its way."

The pioneer citizens were a brave, hardy, and thrifty people, who journeyed westward in ox-carts or in canoes to found homes in the wilderness or to perish in the attempt. Many of them carried certificates from the Government to lands given them for services as soldiers in previous wars. Most of the holders of land grants first located along the St. Francis, but after the earthquake of 1811-12, when most of this land sank, the settlers moved northward, seeking higher ground in Greene, Randolph, and Lawrence counties.

New land grants had to be obtained from the Government; so after becoming located for the second time, these pioneers went to New Madrid, Missouri, and obtained certificates for an equal amount of land



## PIONEER DAYS

to that sunk by the earthquake. The first titles to considerable real estate in Greene, Randolph, and Lawrence counties are still known as "New Madrid Certificates."

When Benjamin and Samuel Crowley came out of Kentucky to find elbow room in the Arkansas wilderness, they first settled near Old Davidsonville in Lawrence County, from which county all the northern counties of the state were ultimately carved. Hearing of the abundance of deer, bear and turkey on the great ridge, the Crowleys in 1821 settled on the spot now occupied by Crowley's Ridge State Park, twelve miles west of Paragould. A settlement was established, and the word went back that it was entirely possible to "live off the fat of the land." In a short time Benjamin and Samuel Crowley had the pleasure of communing with kindred men of the adventurous type, when the Robertson, Pevehouse, Hutchins, Willcockson, Mattix, and other pioneer families cast their lot near the Crowley domain.<sup>1</sup>

William Pevehouse was the first child born in the county, and so far as records can be substantiated, was the first white child born on Crowley's Ridge. James McDaniel and Jesse Payne were early settlers on Village Creek. John Mitchell, an early settler at Gainesville, put up the first cotton gin in the county. Samuel Willcockson erected on Poplar Creek the first steam grist mill on Crowley's Ridge.<sup>2</sup>

When the county was created November 5, 1833, with the approval of Governor John Pope, a temporary county seat was established at Benjamin Crowley's

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<sup>1</sup> *Souvenir Program, Greene County Homecoming, 1936*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, *History of Craighead County*, p. 47.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

home, and the first court was held at one of the numerous springs on the farmstead. The tree under which this first court was held is still standing in the Crowley's Ridge State Park and has been appropriately marked with a tablet by the National Park Service.

Crowley was a friend of the neighborly Indians, as was Ed Mattix, a famous hunter who resided there for a time and later became the first white settler on Buffalo Island. The early field notes show plainly that there was a Delaware Indian village on the site that was later Gainesville. The Shawnees, Osage, and Delawares were here until 1828, when the treaty was made. Some of the hunters remained in this vicinity until as late as 1830.<sup>1</sup>

In 1832, the year before Greene County was established, there was a post office named Crowley, with John Crowley and Benjamin Crowley as postmasters. Other early post offices in Greene County, with the names of their postmasters, were: County Line, Wm. G. Arledge, November 11, 1833; Eutaw, Robert Polley, December 27, 1833.<sup>2</sup> There are no other records of the existence of such places as County Line and Eutaw.

### PIONEER LIFE

"O, the pleasant days of old, which so often people praise!  
True, they wanted all the luxuries that grace our modern days;  
Bare floors were strewed with rushes, the walls let in the cold;  
O, how they must have shivered in those pleasant days of old."

For this narrative, free use is made of passages from printed histories of two adjoining counties: Walter E. McLeod's "Centennial Memorial History of

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenir Program, Greene County Homecoming, 1936*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Publications of the Arkansas Historical Association*, Volume 3, p. 319.

## PIONEER DAYS

Lawrence County," pages 19-23, and Robert T. Webb's "History and Traditions of Clay County," pages 7-14. Pioneer life was similar in the three counties, since Greene County was carved from Lawrence County, and a part of Clay County was derived from Greene County. A brief passage is also selected from Frances Shiras' "History of Baxter County," page 88.

In the years around 1800, restless men under the leadership of Daniel Boone made many trips to the westward and south of the Kentucky frontier. Dissatisfied with the security of half a dozen cabins and the civilizing effects of two score of people, they would take trips entailing many weeks and sometimes months. Those who returned would be scarred, lean, and clothed in animal skins. They brought with them many stories of the land west of the Mississippi—the teeming wild life, fertile soil, heavy forest, and the Indians, friendly and with a high order of civilization, as yet untainted by white men.

In 1803 the United States secured the Louisiana Territory. The continually growing settlements in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi pushed westward the more restless pioneers. In 1819 the Arkansas Territory was formed.

By 1828 the Indians too had been pushed westward to reservations in Oklahoma. By this time the Military Road had been cut through from Helena toward the west, and the Courier Trail or Post Road had been cut from St. Louis toward Little Rock, running along the eastern edge of Crowley's Ridge. The roads were built for the removal of Indians from other states to Arkansas and Oklahoma reservations, and for



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

the facile moving of troops across the new territory, should it need to be protected. People later living along this north-to-south military road saw troops pass up and down it, but they were southern and northern troops moving against each other.

Probably the first settlers and the date of their coming are lost to us. There are always those first comers, trappers and born nomads, who come alone, build their cabins on the sand ridges in the bottoms and along the creek valleys in the hills. Sufficient within themselves, they live and die never knowing of the others, until one of them finds an empty cabin, already decaying and much older than his own.

The men of the first families were usually single when they came—big men, fond of hunting, trapping, and eating. To them life was to be lived free. Game was plentiful. Timber cutting was necessary only when a cabin had to be erected or a dugout made. There were few other people to set an example of rigorous farming, and only a little corn was raised. So the days went by, filled with fishing and hunting, and sometimes broken with trips to a trading post, or back to Tennessee or Kentucky for a wife. On the trips to the trading posts, they would trade corn and furs for shot, powder, and food. Returning married, they would raise big families.

The Pocahontas trading post could be reached only in dry years by people along the Ridge, so most of them went to Cape Girardeau to do their trading. There was little money, and coon skins were generally accepted as currency. Each was equal to 50 cents in "hard money"; deer skins, \$1.00; bear skins, \$2.00 to \$3.00; and otter as high as \$6.00.

## PIONEER DAYS

The occupational life of the early pioneers was simple but arduous. They came into the wilderness bringing with them only those things essential to establishing themselves in their new homes. The equipment of the average settler in this virgin country consisted of a wagon and team, generally of oxen, a cow, a few sheep and hogs, an axe, a hoe or two, a crude breaking plow, a "bull tongue" plow stock; a few tools, such as a hammer, a saw, a frow, a set of augers, and a drawing knife; household utensils; a gun, and one or more dogs. The more well-to-do settlers may have had some better equipment. A few of them had negro slaves, but the slave holders came mostly in the next period. Most of the tools in those days were made by blacksmiths. A gunsmith kept the "shootin' irons" in order. With his tools the settler built his one-room log cabin and supplied it with furniture, except a few chairs, a chest, or a bureau that he may have brought from his old home. Such things were highly prized and handed down to succeeding generations.

Long distance travel for the pioneer was very difficult. There were only trails from one home to another, and the houses were often miles apart. Horses were used for riding purposes. All hauling and most farm work were done with oxen.

As often as was absolutely necessary, one or more settlers from a neighborhood went to Davidsonville or Batesville to obtain the things they must have and could not provide at home. These towns obtained their merchandise by keelboats on Black and White rivers until steamboats began to navigate those streams. The mail also came in by the steamboats, and the set-

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

tlers had to go to the towns to get it until post offices were established.

The clothing of the early settlers was of both cotton and wool, home spun, woven, and sewed. There were no sewing machines then. In winter the women wore bright colored linsey-woolsey plaids or stripes. The men sometimes wore buckskin breeches, hunting jackets and coonskin caps. Some of the more well-to-do had a suit of "store" clothes reserved for special occasions. Home-made shoes were worn in the winter time and on Sundays and special occasions.

There were then no saw mills to supply lumber to the new home builder. As a substitute he hewed or split out boards. He often had no nails and had to use wooden pegs driven into auger holes. He made his tables, chairs, bedsteads, etc., for his home. The common way of making a bedstead was to make a framework of poles in a back corner of the room and floor it with boards at the desired height from the floor. On this floor was laid a tick filled with straw and on this a feather bed. Later, "cord beds" were used. Shelves to keep things on were made by laying boards on pegs driven into holes in the wall.

One room served for living room, kitchen, dining room, and sleeping room. Sometimes additional sleeping and storage room was provided by attic rooms reached by ladders, or a lean-to or side room might be added. Occasionally a "three-pen" house was built, which consisted of two rooms and a hall between. This was the most popular plan of building for large families for a hundred years, and only in recent years has fallen into disuse.

## PIONEER DAYS

A broad fireplace in one end of the house provided heat and a place to cook. There were no stoves in those days. In the winter time, this fireplace piled high with burning wood furnished both heat and lights. Coal oil lamps had not come into use. Tallow candles and "grease lamps" were used. Cooking utensils consisted of skillets and lids for baking and frying, pots for boiling, and pot hooks by which the pots were handled and suspended over the fire.

Corn—ground, mortared, and grated—was used for bread, and whole corn was made into hominy. Before water mills were built, the corn was ground on mills similar to coffee mills, or beaten into meal with a mortar and pestle. Meat in abundance was supplied by wild game. Deer and bears were plentiful. Bear grease was a good substitute for hog lard. Hunting to the early settlers was both business and pleasure.

Since there were no means of refrigeration, everything had to be preserved in some other way. Meat was smoked or dried. Fruits were dried or canned. Corn on the cob was pickled in brine. Some vegetables were preserved in their native state by hilling. Kraut was made and beans were dried.

Soap was made from wood ashes and the lower grade of lard. Starch was made from corn or wheat bran which was soaked until the starch sank to the bottom of the container. A batting paddle was used to beat the dirt out of the clothes after they had been soaked in the home-made soap.

Large gourds were used for containers for soap, lard, and other things. Those with handles on them



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

were used for dippers. Cedar and oaken buckets and wooden mixing bowls supplemented the few utensils.

The social features of the settlers of this period were very limited because of their fewness and distance apart. They sometimes combined social features with house-raising, log-rollings, and quiltings, to which everybody, far and near, was invited. At these they had jumping, wrestling, and shooting matches. The young people of both sexes were there, and at night there might be a dance. There was no lack of love-making. As long as these occasions lasted—sometimes two or three days—sumptuous meals were served to the settlers who had come many miles to be present.

It must not be inferred that there were no religious people among the early settlers. There were many devout persons, who sought to plant and nourish the gospel in this new field. Foremost among them were Eli Linsey, who is given credit for having organized the Spring River circuit in 1815, Isaac Brookfield, Andrew Boyd, and John M. Steele, Methodists, and John Milligan, Cumberland Presbyterian, who, in 1825, organized the first congregation of that denomination in northeast Arkansas. These men preached the gospel, ministered to the sick, solemnized marriages, and buried the dead. While their scholastic education would not measure up to that required of ministers today, they were men of pronounced religion, some fluency, and an acquaintance with the Bible. The Bible was the one book that was universal among the first comers, and the people were well acquainted with its contents. In the coming together of the people, the Bible was discussed, and the men who could quote its contents and apply them were considered educated.

## PIONEER DAYS

Religious meetings were held in homes for a time, but before long, log churches were constructed. On Sundays people would hitch up teams or yoke of oxen early and come the long miles over the faint hill trails to the church. Before they reached it, those already there would hear the creaking protest of the home-made wagons being echoed down the valleys and about the hills. Living apart in their scattered cabins, people were glad to see other people. There would be shouted greetings, much laughter, and joking before church took up.

The sermons were long, and afterward there would be an intermission before church in the evening. The men would gather to exchange talk and strong tobacco, and to discuss farming and hunting. The women had the growth and merits of their children to compare, and the usual talk of clothes and house-keeping.

### A PIONEER PREACHER

In the year 1818, Rev. Isaac Brookfield left New Jersey, and made his way to St. Louis, where he secured a horse and rode into the wilds of Arkansas to become the first Protestant missionary to the Indians and whites. The minutes of the Methodist Conference for 1821, as recorded in the Congressional Library, Washington, show that he was first located at Hot Springs, and a year later was sent to Spring River Circuit, with headquarters at Davidsonville, in Lawrence County, where he married Nancy Campbell, daughter of a Lawrence County pioneer.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, *History of Craighead County*, p. 508.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

He continued to preach in a local sphere and was an eloquent and learned preacher. About the year 1825 he was engaged in mercantile pursuits at Davidsonville. His dry goods were shipped from New York and required six months to reach their destination. Groceries were usually purchased at New Orleans.<sup>1</sup>

Through his influence, Benjamin Crowley, Lawrence Thompson, and others instigated a movement for the creation of a new county. Isaac Brookfield was thereupon selected as the first judge of Greene County.

Being of a frail physique, he was unable to withstand the hardships of the wilderness and his health failed, so after a few years he located in what later became Greenfield, about four miles northeast of the present town of Harrisburg. Records show that he was postmaster there in 1834. On his farm he carried on as a farmer, general merchant, tanner, shoemaker and bookbinder, having a large colony of slaves and workmen on his estate. The old family Bible which he used in the early days has been preserved, and is neatly bound in cowhide, tanned on the Brookfield farm.<sup>2</sup>

### FIRST WHITE CHILD

In an effort to relieve the tedium of factual history, some humorous stories are related here concerning William Pevehouse, who is credited with being the first white child born in Greene County. These incidents were recounted by a relative, B. H. Crowley, in the *Soliphone* of December 18, 1906.

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, *History of Craighead County*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 508.

## PIONEER DAYS

William Pevehouse was perhaps the first white child born on Crowley's Ridge. He was a grandchild of the old pioneer Benjamin Crowley, and he was for a long time an honored and respected citizen. He was Sheriff of the county at one time, and his name appears prominently on the church books of the early Methodist congregation of the county, as its secretary and in other official capacities. He was a small man in stature, and many jokes are told on him, especially of his size.

When he was about grown, he and his brother went to a house-raising, and as usual on those occasions, the women had a quilting during the day, and all joined in a dance at night. The young people cleared the room, by moving the bedsteads, tables and pots to one side, and danced all night to the music of the fiddle or banjo, and by the light of the tallow candle, or pine torch. Late in the night when the dancers became tired and were resting in readiness for the next set, "little Billy Pevehouse," as he was called, seated himself on the rim of a large cooking pot to rest himself, when a young lady, who could not find a seat, asked and was granted permission to sit on Billy's lap. Now this young lady was large and corpulent and the young man's lap was not very expansive. Anyway, the seemingly impossible feat of setting a large, fat girl on the lap of a little spindle-shanked young man was accomplished, and Billy being a very modest and obliging fellow, peeped out from under his load of femininity and pretended to be enjoying the torture. As the other dancers were somewhat tired, the resting period was longer than usual, and Billy had to bear up his magnificent cargo of beauty for quite a while, or at least it seemed an age to him. The sharp rim of the pot began to



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

be anything but a soft cushion for poor Billy's legs, and he was gradually being forced down into the vessel. At this critical moment his brother began to feel a deep concern for Billy's safety, and went around to look after him. He found Billy holding his mammoth sweetheart, and crying unalloyed agony, and the brother had to invent a ruse to rescue his suffering kinsman. He proposed to Billy that they go out to look after their horses, and when the girl arose from his lap it took the brother, assisted by the girl, to extricate Billy from the pot, and set him on his feet. He vowed in after years that he never proposed to nurse another girl, not even his better half, and he always had an aversion to nursing children, so much so that his wife had all that to do by herself, he claiming that he never had fully recovered from his experience of that night.

Again, it was told of him that he once had a warrant for the arrest of a man of great size, and finding this fellow at Greenboro, Sheriff Pevehouse made the arrest, but the man refused to go with him and declined to make bond for his appearance at court, but instead lay flat down on the ground and refused to budge. Pevehouse summoned two men to guard the prisoner, and went and secured a wagon in which to transport his man to jail. After being placed in the wagon, the man saw what he was up against, and began to beg to be permitted to make bond, which the Sheriff graciously allowed him to do.

It is also told of him that when a mere boy he took his rifle and went into the timber to kill a deer, and while creeping through the brush not far from his home, he discovered what he thought was a large buck, practically concealed behind a large tree. Fearing to move to where he could get a better view of the deer, lest he might frighten

## PIONEER DAYS

the animal, he shot at such portion of its body as he could see, and at the crack of his gun, the deer fell dead. He rushed up to view the animal, and discovered that he had killed one of his grandfather's valuable calves. He went home crest-fallen, fearing to make known the fatal mistake he had made. True to his open, honorable nature, he did tell his grandparent that he had killed one of his fine calves, and instead of scolding him, his grandfather asked him to go and bring the calf in, saying that a fat calf was about as good as a deer.

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## AN OLD RECORD BOOK

The earliest record book known to be in existence in Greene County dates back to 1819, when Lawrence Thompson, a young man in Kentucky, made a book for recording the legal forms most used by a lawyer. Through the years 1820 and 1821 he continued his synopsis of court procedure, evidently planning a legal career.

The Thompson family followed Benjamin Crowley into Arkansas Territory, and Lawrence Thompson was chosen as the first county clerk. The fact that his records indicate that he came from Green County, Kentucky, may throw some light on the choice of a name for the new county, especially if we remember that the Act creating our county contained the spelling "Green," omitting the final "e."

The book was home-made of a fairly good grade of unruled paper. The brown leather back was whanged on in three places with rawhide and stitched with flax thread. The cover is shrunk and blistered, and much of the paper is worn at corners and ends,

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

and discolored by more than a century of time. The writing is legible, in good penmanship, with artistic shading. No doubt the recording was done with a goose quill pen and home-made ink.

An examination of this book reveals that Lawrence Thompson was equipped with the necessary legal information needed in the creation of a new county. That he was a good mathematician is shown by numerous examples in advanced arithmetic, with an explanation of the method of solution. He recorded dates of births and deaths, giving his own birth as January 16, 1799. The last date recorded in the book is 1863, seemingly in different handwriting.

It is interesting to note that in 1837 corn sold for fifty cents per bushel, and pork at five cents per pound, but a barrel of salt brought nine dollars. In 1845 bacon cost ten cents per pound, corn sold for fifty cents per bushel, and a cow and calf brought ten dollars. Such labor as killing hogs and chopping wood was rewarded at the rate of fifty cents per day.

J. Sam Thompson, great-grandson of the first Greene County Clerk, had the distinction of assuming the same office on January 1, 1937, which had been vacated by his great-grandfather exactly one hundred years previously. He now has in his possession the old record book, which has been handed down through four generations.

## WILD GAME

Many thrilling stories are told of the bear hunts of Mose Robinson and Samuel Crowley before the formation of Greene County. The Bradshaws and Jack Smith became famous as hunters.

## PIONEER DAYS

Mrs. Isabella Highfill was quite old in 1889 when she related her reminiscences of wild life in the early days. She said that the men would devote the summer to raising crops, and would hunt and trap during the winter months, their game consisting of deer, bear, wildcats, wolves, and turkeys for food, and otter, beaver, mink and raccoon for their furs. These were taken by ox team to Wittsburgh or Memphis, and often realized \$100 on one load. Prices ranged as follows: bear meat, 25 cents per pound; deer, 10 cents per pound; turkeys, \$1 each; wildcat and wolf, 10 cents per pound. Otter hides brought \$5 each; beaver, \$7.50; mink, \$3; and raccoon, 50 cents. Because the hunting season was much more profitable than the farming season, there was very little done toward developing the country prior to the Civil War. Everything was plentiful in the way of wild game and fruits, and the range was so good that stock could live the year round without being fed.<sup>1</sup>

When Pressley Huckabay first moved to Greene County in 1857, settlers were few, provisions scarce, and all depended, to a great extent, upon the gun for a means of living. When he wanted fresh meat, he frequently sent his children around a thicket within three hundred yards of the house, and would pick out a good one from the drove of deer thus started up. His method for catching turkeys was very ingenious. Building a square pen of logs near where he fed his stock, he covered it with poles, and then dug a slanting passage-way leading under the logs. This passage-way would end abruptly after entering the pen. Corn was then scattered along the passage or outside slant. The turkey

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, pp. 142, 143.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

would have to stoop a little to go under the pen, but as soon as inside would fly up to the level ground above, and instead of looking down to get out would always look up. Mr. Huckabay often caught as high as eight or ten at a time in this manner. Coons were so thick that a man could take his rifle and kill as many as fifteen or twenty a day. John Wooten, a neighbor, killed twenty-five on one occasion, and Mr. Huckabay killed as many as fifteen. Bears were so plentiful that their meat was used instead of bacon, and was put down for the season in much the same way as pork. A good bearskin was worth about \$5 at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Mr. Huckabay killed a number of panthers, and related numerous thrilling exploits with them. He was attacked by a panther at one time, and after having fired three bullets against its head, which failed to penetrate the skull, he realized that he was getting in very close quarters. Just at this critical moment his faithful dogs renewed their attacks on the panther, thus giving their owner a chance to send a bullet just back of the fore legs of the animal, which stretched him lifeless on the ground.<sup>1</sup>

Wild animals continued to be abundant in Greene County, to the extent of interfering with home life. In 1885, the County Court authorized the payment of the following premiums: for each wildcat scalp taken in the County, two dollars; for each wolf scalp, four dollars; and for each panther scalp, six dollars.<sup>2</sup> Frequent entries in the records thereafter indicate that the premiums were being claimed. Evidently the wild animals were slow in disappearing, because more than thirty years later, the County Court ordered "that

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 2, p. 437.

## PIONEER DAYS

twenty-five dollars be and the same is hereby set aside to pay for wildcat and wolf scalps at the rate of two dollars and fifty cents each, for the year ending October 23, 1918.”<sup>1</sup>

### A BEAR HUNT

No story of pioneer life would be complete without at least one yarn about a bear hunt. Although the entertaining tales here related sound like suitable entries for a modern “Liar’s Club,” they did have the distinction of appearing in Goodspeed’s “Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas,” published in 1889.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the Bradshaws, noted hunters, settled on the upper end of the Ridge, in what is now Clay County, and A. J. Smith, “the great Arkansas bear hunter,” settled near the Bradshaws and married into their family. Some time later he cleared up a farm a few miles east of the present town of Paragould, where he lived the remainder of his lifetime. He was known far and near, and was the most noted eccentric character in all of northeastern Arkansas. He was a veritable backwoodsman, not accustomed to the finer comforts of advanced civilization. He owned slaves, raised large numbers of cattle, and killed more wild animals than any other man in the section. He usually went bareheaded and barefoot, with his collar open and sleeves rolled up, and nearly always carried with him his rifle, shot pouch and large hunting knife. Upon his appearance in this plight he was much feared, especially by those not acquainted with him. He was, however, kind and benevolent, brave and generous, and had but

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Court Record*, Book 12, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, pp. 115, 116.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

few enemies, being a firm friend to those he respected, but a dangerous man in a quarrel.

On one occasion, after having sold a herd of cattle to Governor Drew, he went equipped as usual to the governor's residence to collect his pay. The governor happened to be absent. He was met at the door by Mrs. Drew, who though much frightened invited him to step in and take a seat at the fire. He looked down and said he did not like "to step on that quilt." The carpet being loose, he took it by the edge, folded it over, and then sprang across and took a chair near the fire. Mrs. Drew felt convinced that her unwelcome guest was a horse thief, and thereupon had his horse put into the stable and locked, knowing that her husband would return soon. On seeing the latter, she went out to meet him, and related the appearance of the mysterious stranger, whereupon the Governor, with a hearty laugh, replied, "O! that is Jack Smith, it's just like him."

Angeline, Jack Smith's wife, was an excellent shot with the rifle, and often accompanied him on his hunting excursions. Once while returning home upon a trail, desiring to "prowl around a little longer," he requested his companion not to wait for him. Accordingly she rode on, but had not gone far until the dogs, remaining with Jack, chased up a huge bear, pursuing it so closely that it stopped and turned its back against the roots of a fallen tree, and began to cuff the dogs right and left. Jack ran to their assistance, whereupon the bear, having cowed the dogs, sprang forward and rushed upon him. Jack in retreating stumbled and fell. Just at this critical moment, Angeline, who had heard the confusion, wheeled her steed about, took

## PIONEER DAYS

deliberate aim and shot and killed the monster beast, thus saving her husband's life.

This great hunter generally wore "buckskin breeches." He was of a humorous disposition, and on one occasion was visited by a party of well dressed gentlemen from Memphis, who, upon seeing the large quantity of peltry he had on hand, asked how he came to be so successful in hunting. His reply was that formerly when dressed in his buckskin trousers and other outfit, the animals, especially the deer, had become so well acquainted with him that they knew him by sight, and were always on the outlook for him, in consequence of which he could not get near enough to shoot them. It then occurred to him that he must change his garb, and thus deceive the animals. So now, he said, that upon approaching a herd of deer, the sentinel buck seeing him would inform the rest that there was no danger—that it was only some finely dressed gentleman from Memphis, who was harmless.



## CHAPTER III

### PERIOD OF GROWTH

#### RAILROADS

**A**N ARTICLE which appeared in the *Arkansas Gazette* in 1891 depicted the changes wrought in Greene County by the coming of the railroads.

During the past eight years, no section of Arkansas has so rapidly developed as the Northeast. Before the building of the Iron Mountain Railroad, about seventeen years ago, there was not a railroad penetrating this portion of the State, and old Wittsburg, at the head of navigation on the St. Francis River, was the chief entrepot and commercial mart of this section. But the glory of Wittsburg, like that of many towns whose decadence set in with the advent of the iron horse, has faded and is now only a matter of history. It is one like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"—

"Whose glory like a pageant faded,  
Leaves not a rack behind."

It used to be, and the time has not been many years ago, that the counties of Greene, Craighead and Poinsett, and the territory which comprises Clay, had their commercial headquarters at Wittsburg. The merchants who had stores scattered over different portions of Northeast Arkansas, hauled their merchandise in wagons from Wittsburg and supplied their customers at prices in keeping with the expensive means of transportation employed.

But the railroads came! They came from the four quarters of the globe and no section of

## PERIOD OF GROWTH



PARAGOULD SOUTH EASTERN TRAIN, 1898

the State is now so abundantly supplied with railroad transportation. It was only a few years after the completion of the main line of the Iron Mountain until the Helena branch was built from Knobel to Helena, and then came the St. Louis, Arkansas and Texas (Cotton Belt), stretching across the State from the Missouri to the Texas line. Then came the Kansas City, Springfield and Memphis from the West to the East, opening up new avenues of commerce.

These roads followed each other in rapid succession and necessarily wrought a revolution in commerce. The building of these roads was followed by an advent of capital and immigration unprecedented in the history of the State. Crowley's Ridge, through whose massive forest the shriek of the steam whistle had seldom reverberated, and whose varied soil had, as Gov. Hughes used to express it, "Gathered fertility from the repose of ages," became a veritable Mecca for the capitalist seeking a profitable investment and the immigrant in quest of a home where unoccupied lands were rich, plentiful and cheap, and the past seven years have witnessed

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

such a revolution in business as only the spirit and genius of progressive Americans can inaugurate. Towns and villages have sprung up all along the line of the railroads and the ceaseless whir of machinery set in motion by innumerable mills and factories has converted the quiet "repose of nature" into the busy hum of industry.<sup>1</sup>

### TIMBER INDUSTRY

For forty years after the coming of the railroads to Greene County, the principal industry of the county dealt with the timber business. Individuals, intent upon clearing crop land, cut the trees and hauled them to sawmills, securing good prices for the timber. In some cases, commercial interests bought land at a relatively low cost, stripped it of valuable timber, and left it to be sold for taxes.

In 1889, there were thirty-four steam power sawmills, six stave factories, one shingle mill, and two planing mills within the county. One of these—the J. M. Reed Lumber Company—had capacity for cutting 100,000 feet of lumber per day. Most of the sawmills had cotton gins, and some grist mills, attached.<sup>2</sup>

A study of some of the mill owners of the time reveals the extent of the industry. John W. Hooker owned a lumbering mill, situated on the Iron Mountain Railroad eight miles below Knobel. This mill had a capacity of 10,000 feet per day, utilizing in large measure the timber from Mr. Hooker's 540 acre farm.<sup>3</sup> Henry Wrape, manufacturer of tight barrel staves, at

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<sup>1</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, August 26, 1891, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 144, 145.

## PERIOD OF GROWTH

Paragould, employed about fifty men, and turned out about five million barrel staves per year.<sup>1</sup> W. C. Hasty also employed about fifty men in a lumber mill.<sup>2</sup> L. G. Dillman owned several sawmills, turning out lumber for building material.<sup>3</sup> John F. Brinkman & Son, manufacturers of tight barrel staves, put their plant in operation in 1888.<sup>4</sup> A paragraph is quoted about C. P. Huckabay to indicate the possibilities in the timber business.

C. P. Huckabay, the leading mill man of this section, is now the owner of 1,000 acres of land, with seventy-five acres under cultivation. This he rents, and his time is fully occupied in the lumber and stave business, being the owner of two large sawmills, one located in Marmaduke and the other in the vicinity. The one at Marmaduke has a capacity of 1,500 feet per day, and the one in the country will run about 8,000 feet. Mr. Huckabay is now building a tram road three and a half miles into the woods, which will be connected with the road of Mr. Rosengrant, extending two and a half miles further into a fine timbered country, and will supply them timber for about five years. Mr. Huckabay has been in the railroad supply business, getting out ties and other timbers, and at one time ran about 300 men, furnishing them with provisions from his supply store then located at Marmaduke. He is now securing all kinds of building and bridge timber.<sup>5</sup>

As the timber supply dwindled, the mill owners moved to other locations or spent their time in agricultural pursuits. Today there is not sufficient timber

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

in the area to supply the heavy demand for building materials.

### AGRICULTURE

In the early days of Greene County, the livelihood of practically every individual depended upon some type of farming for at least a portion of the year. However, since game was plentiful and markets rare, there was very little necessity for raising livestock. The one or two family cows, with bells on, grazed at large on unfenced woods pasture the greater part of the year. The few hogs that were raised were marked by slits in their ears and turned outside until they weighed about one hundred fifty pounds, at an age of from one to two years. They were then fed on corn for a few weeks before slaughtering. These almost wild scrub hogs furnished bacon to supplement the diet for the hot summer work.

The two most cultivated crops in the entire history of the county have been cotton and corn. Cotton was the sole cash crop of almost every family until the coming of the railroads, and it has continued to maintain its exalted position until the present time in far too many instances. Corn has maintained an important place in the life of the county. It was used in the early days mainly for food—bread and hominy—a major item in the daily life of an agricultural people, and as feed for horses, mules, chickens, and occasionally pigs.

After 1880, there began to be some changes from the limited crop plan. Wheat began to be produced, and was raised in abundance in the county in the early 1900's. Roller mills at Lafe, Marmaduke, and Para-

## PERIOD OF GROWTH

gould received wheat that was grown and threshed over much of the county. Since threshing machines and binders were necessary to the harvesting of wheat, the raising of oats as a feed crop came into being rather prominently. At the present time, very little wheat is grown, as the yield is not sufficient to justify the planting.

With the coming of the railroads, a quick method of transportation to St. Louis markets was furnished. The growing of hogs and cattle began to occupy a prominent place in agriculture. Livestock raising brought on the necessity for a change in agricultural crops. During recent years, cotton has lost its exalted position to corn, soybeans, and hay.

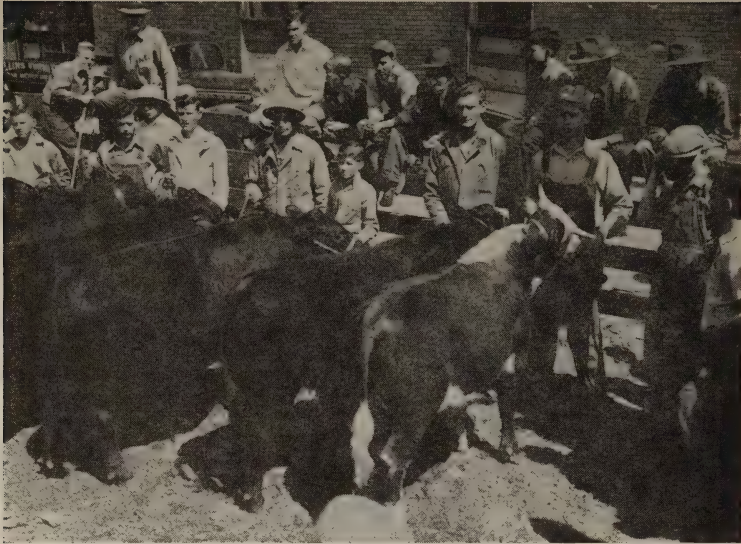


LOAD OF COTTON HAULED BY JAKE LAMBERT

Since 1920, farmers have turned much attention to diversification. On nearly every farm there is now grown cotton, corn, hay, sorghum, soybeans, truck gardens, dairy or beef cattle, hogs, and poultry.

An inestimable amount of good has been brought the county by the County and Home agents. These

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY



ANNUAL FAT CALF SHOW

people advise farmers and their wives, sons, and daughters on better methods of procedure.

Since the depression years of the early thirties, the Federal Government has come to the rescue of the farmer. The Agricultural Adjustment Agency has done much to lead farmers away from an all-cotton existence to a diversification of other crops and livestock. Phosphate and lime have been distributed at very little cost, and soil improving legumes have been encouraged. The Soil Conservation Service has been instrumental in terracing, ditching, and building ponds. The Farm Security Administration has done much to rehabilitate many farmers in the county.

In 1945, there were 39,720 acres planted to cotton, which was twenty-one per cent of the crop land of the county, with a yield of 37,090 bales, an average



## PERIOD OF GROWTH

of 448 pounds per acre. The 1945 agricultural report shows that in Greene County there were 48,912 acres of corn; approximately 5,000 acres of rice; 62,196 acres of lespedeza; 19,111 acres of soybeans; 18,000 acres in miscellaneous hay crops; approximately 600 acres in commercial orchards and vegetables; and about 900 acres of idle crop land. This gives a total farm area of 194,439 acres, which was divided up into 3,661 individual farms.

## ASSESSED VALUATION

A glance at the figures for assessed valuation and taxes will serve as an index to the growth of the county. In 1866, the total value of taxable property in Greene County amounted to \$476,518. By 1880, the assessed valuation had reached \$681,046. Railroad property added immensely to the valuation in the decade that followed. In 1888, the total assessed valuation had increased to \$1,876,111. The influx of settlers and industries has brought the assessed valuation of Greene County to \$7,601,984 for the calendar year 1945. Even this figure is not indicative of the actual value, since it is a general practice to assess property at a fraction of its worth.

The money received in taxes shows a corresponding increase. The total paid by residents of Greene County for state tax, road tax, and county tax in 1866 was \$12,374. In 1880, the total was only \$16,099. Railroad taxes boosted the total to \$29,103 in 1888. These taxes seem small when compared with the \$273,841 received from taxes in Greene County for the calendar year of 1945.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

### GAINESVILLE

There is probably more history connected with Gainesville than any other village in Greene County. In 1846, Gainesville consisted of a log court house, two store buildings, and five dwelling houses. The community did not have a name until it "gained" the location of the county seat in 1840, and hence became "Gainesville." At its height, the town had a population of about three hundred or three hundred fifty in 1884.

The first newspaper in Greene County was established in Gainesville in 1874 by Rev. J. D. C. Cobb. Frank M. Daulton published a paper at Gainesville for a number of years.

When the county seat was moved to Paragould late in 1884, the business and professional men moved to Paragould, leaving their homes to go down in disuse. The majority of the population followed. Since then, the community has consisted almost entirely of farmers.

### MARMADUKE

During the Civil War, General Marmaduke established a camp on the present location of the town that bears his name. He and his men had crossed the St. Francis River at Chalk Bluff in Clay County, and came on into Greene County to stay in camp for two or three months. They used the camp for headquarters, and sent out scouting parties to watch a group of guerilla soldiers under Quantrell in Clay County. About five miles east of Rector there is a little grove

## PERIOD OF GROWTH

with about thirty graves, holding the remains of Quantrell's soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Goodspeed's history gave a description of the town in 1889:

Marmaduke, a town of about 200 inhabitants on the Cotton Belt Railroad, twelve miles northeast of Paragould, contains four stores, a blacksmith shop, cotton gin and press, church, school house, a sawmill and boarding house. From here a tramway is run a mile out on the St. Francis River, where other mills are located. The village was first laid out in 1882 by the Railroad Company.<sup>2</sup>

Marmaduke was a prosperous sawmill town as long as the timber lasted. Fire destroyed a number of business houses, and the town was hard hit by the depression, but has recovered to some extent. Marmaduke has its own water system, has electricity and telephone service, has a good school system, and three churches—Methodist, Baptist, and Church of Christ. At present, the town has about eight hundred inhabitants.

## DELAPLAINE

There is evidence that a large Indian settlement was once located near the site of Delaplaine. An Indian mound and a great pile of chipped flint still remain.

The oldest records in the Greene County court house contain numerous references to the town of De la Plaine. For convenience, the name has come to be written as one word.

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<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by C. W. Ferguson, of Marmaduke.

<sup>2</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 119.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

The main line of the Iron Mountain railroad passed through Delaplaine before Gainesville secured a railroad. When the county safe was purchased in 1877, it was shipped from St. Louis to Delaplaine, then hauled to Gainesville. Charlie Stedman says that the roads were so bad that the safe had to be pulled on a sled. Three streams had to be crossed during the journey. County court records show that James R. Jackson was paid \$200 for hauling the safe from Delaplaine to Gainesville.

Delaplaine is one of the three incorporated towns in Greene County, the other two being Paragould and Marmaduke. The community surrounding Delaplaine produces the major portion of the rice grown in Greene County. Quantities of railroad ties are shipped annually from this point. One of the consolidated schools of the county is located at Delaplaine.

### LAFE

Some of the people who settled in the Ramer's Chapel community from 1850 to 1865 were W. T. Staires, Henry Starnes, William Fisk, D. L. Baxter, G. W. Ramer, Jeff Ramer, John Eastep, Moses Eastep, Murph Seagroves, Tom Dortch, and the Beaton family.<sup>1</sup> Other early settlers in the vicinity were Hezekiah Wright, Bill Hill, Dan Frock, and the Nolan, Lauchstaedt, and Wagner families.

Herman Toelkin came in 1886 to the section later known as Upper Lafe. He advertised in the newspaper "Germania" for other German Lutherans to come to the community, and was successful in inducing many families to come. They founded a Lutheran church

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<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by D. C. Eastep, of Lafe.

## PERIOD OF GROWTH

at Upper Lafe, and later united with the Lutheran church at Lafe.

The town of Lafe was originally known as Newberry, named for a sawmill owner. The postmaster secured the name of Loulyma for the post office. This caused confusion, since freight was billed to Newberry. A group of citizens circulated a petition and obtained the name of Lafe for the town, in honor of a local merchant, Lafe Miller.

This little town has a reputation of producing substantial, law-abiding citizens. Young people who come to Paragould from Lafe are highly regarded.

## WALCOTT

The Crowley family settled in 1821 near the present location of Walcott. Since that time, there have continued to be industrious, thrifty settlers who have upheld the traditions of their predecessor. Walcott has never been a very large town. In 1910, the Bank of Walcott was established, and lasted until 1924.

During the time of development of Crowley's Ridge State Park, the Civilian Conservation Corps built barracks for the young men who were stationed there. The park, opened in 1934, has brought thousands of visitors.

## OTHER COMMUNITIES

Other communities which contain, in general, one or two stores, a cotton gin, and a school are Beech Grove, Light, Stanford, Bard, and Fontaine. Additional settlements are Finch, Hooker, Stonewall, White Oak, Bethel, Brighton, Lorado, and Halliday.



## CHAPTER IV

# HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

Slogan: *"You'll Like Paragould"*

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT

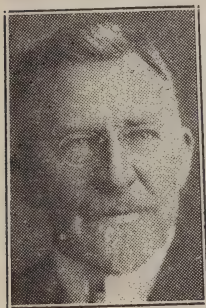
IT WAS IN 1881 that J. W. Paramore and others conceived the idea of building a railroad diagonally across Arkansas from its northeast corner to its southwest corner. That road was then called the Texas and St. Louis Railway. At about the same time the great Jay Gould was promoting another railroad in Arkansas called the St. Louis and Iron Mountain. These railroads crossed on the eastern slopes of Crowley's Ridge in Greene County, not far from the center of the county. At the intersection point, W. S. Pruett and J. J. Lambert owned the land. Of course, it was apparent to all that a city should blossom forth at the intersection of these railroads. Thus the city was plotted. Its principal street, then only a trail in the woods, was called Pruett Street in honor of one of the owners of the land. Then the citizens began racking their brains for a suitable name for the new-born community, not being satisfied with "Parmley" and "the Crossing," as it was being designated. It was reasoned that J. W. Paramore and Jay Gould, the railroad promoters, more than anybody else, were responsible for the new community's birth. The name "Paragould" was coined, by using part of each name. It is proudly asserted that mail sent from any place on the

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

globe, simply addressed Paragould, will reach its destination.

The town of Paragould was incorporated March 3, 1883. New settlers flocked to the town from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. As it became apparent that Paragould would soon become the center of the business life of the county, the old merchants, lawyers, physicians, and pioneers of other professions, moved bag and baggage from Gainesville. On October 6, 1884, the voters of the county, by a close margin, ordered the removal of the County Seat from Gainesville to Paragould.

In 1883 the Methodists founded the first church to be erected in Paragould, followed by the Catholic church in the same year, and the Baptist and Christian churches in 1885. It is claimed that George R. Hopkins conducted the first school in Paragould. Electric lights were installed on the streets and in the homes in 1891. Five years later, the telephone put in its appearance. The streets were paved about 1912. The city water plant was built in 1896, and in 1916 the White Way became a part of the downtown district. The Missouri Pacific Railroad Company established shops in Paragould in 1905. In 1925 the city received a grant of \$2,000 from the Harmon Foundation, of New York, for the purchase of a permanent recreation center. The Harmon Playfield was purchased with the money, and a park developed that has won for Paragould more than \$5,000 in cash and other prizes. The city was honored in 1934 by the National Clean-up and Paint-up Campaign Bureau



WM. E. HARMON

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

with a cup for being the outstanding town in Arkansas in cleanliness and civic beautification.<sup>1</sup>

J. R. Taylor published in the *Soliphone* on December 24, 1909, some historical sketches of Paragould. The following excerpt describes conditions at the time the town was founded.

The stranger who visits Paragould today can little suspect that all its wealth and beautiful surroundings, its magnificent store buildings and establishments, its miles of cement walks, etc., have grown from a niche cut out of the woods here for a railroad and timber camp, scarcely more than a quarter of a century ago, and it seems a wonder even to one who has watched the progress and broken the brush from the beginning.

Twenty-seven years ago last spring, the Iron Mountain railroad completed in a manner its branch from Gainesville to Paragould, then and for some time after called the "Crossing."

The traveler over this road left St. Louis, with its luxurious environment, at night, to awaken in the morning amidst the cypress swamps of Missouri and Arkansas. Despite the wild and desolate appearance in general, there was something to admire as the sun shone out on the seemingly interminable forests, for the tall trees were many of them covered with vines and the lower ones supported drooping festoons of the lovely purple wisteria, cultivated in the North with great care for its graceful beauty and fragrance. Railroad enterprise had just entered this new field and a few of the neighboring farmers had temporarily left their clearings, had literally pitched their tents on this new ground at "The

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<sup>1</sup> *Souvenir Program, Greene County Homecoming and Arkansas Centennial Celebration, 1936*, p. 25.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

Crossing," and were at work with teams hauling logs to the prospective mills, two or three of which were erected and put in operation during the summer.

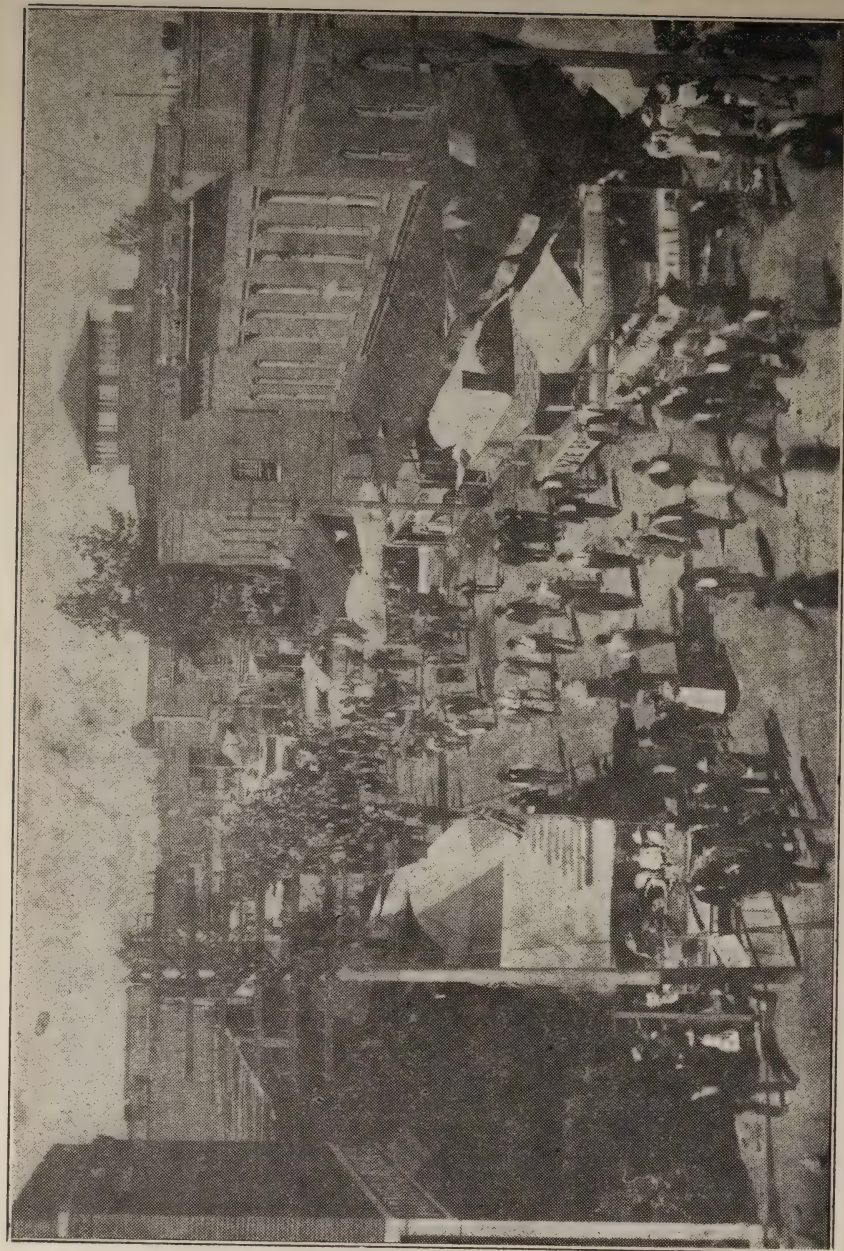
Business enterprises came in and developed rapidly even under difficulties, mills began to cut out the lumber, teamsters began to drive their loaded ox wagons through the mud in all directions, for the roads seemed to be wherever the errands called. We knew there were a goodly number of people somewhere for they appeared from the woods in one direction, and disappeared behind the woods in the opposite direction.

The I. M. R. R. built a small depot in those early months, standing just about where the Dickinson lumber yards office now stands, and during the summer of that year the Cotton Belt built a like one on about the same ground now occupied by the Union Station near the crossing.

Of course a rapidly growing town must have a name, so what was known as "The Crossing" was discarded and Paragould adopted as honoring high officials of both roads, but the I. M. declined the honor, for some time, perhaps two years, calling and posting their station as Parmley, while the one a few hundred feet away, knew not Parmley and was called Paragould. This caused some confusion and there were instances of passengers being misled, and presumably the I. M. concluded that it was wise to accept the situation and then also called the name Paragould, and after a time moved the depot building to join the other where the Union Station was kept until destroyed by fire some five or six years ago.

C. E. Richardson, who moved to Paragould in 1896, summarized the growth of the town as follows:





STREET FAIR, PRUETT STREET, 1902

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

"Paragould began as a manufacturing town. Wood-working and general timber business has been continued, and probably leads all other industries in the number of men employed and the amount of the payroll. Si Whitley put up the first saw mill in what is now north Paragould, and that section of the city has always contained most of the mills, factories, gins, and plants of various kinds. Henry Wrape and his partner, Dave Ray, operated the first stave mill, which was only a buckler, which splits out the staves. Huntsman and Holman established a mill about where the Bradsher Gin now stands. The Pekin Company built a large plant in the southeast section of town. Later the Hickson Brothers, followed by the Veneering Company, built in the same section. A chair factory was also erected and operated for years near where the Hickson-Rogers plant is situated. An ice factory, electric light plant, telephone system, water-works, and sewerage system sprang into existence as the city grew. The division point, round-house and machine shops of the Missouri Pacific road are in the southern section of Paragould. The state highway district offices, yards, and operating headquarters are located in Paragould.

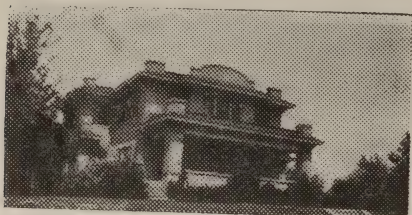
"Local capital, sponsored by W. C. Hasty, Bertig Bros., and J. F. Cardwell, constructed the Paragould Southeastern Railway, as a timber project. After the road had accomplished that purpose, and had been extended as far as Hornersville, Missouri, the road was sold to the Cotton Belt lines. This road opened up one of the finest timber sections, fishing and hunting resorts in the South. The town of Cardwell, Missouri, was named after Frank Cardwell, and the town of Bertig after the Bertig Brothers, all of Paragould, and



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

promoters of the Paragould Southeastern Railway.

"The names of Pruett Street and Pruett's Chapel church, school, and neighborhood, are reminders of Willis and Charles Pruett, and some additions made to the town by Lambert, Bramlett and McDonald, will preserve their memories. These men did not capitalize on their opportunity and obstruct the growth of Paragould, and in the evening of life had only a bare competence.



SOME RESIDENCES OF PARAGOULD

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

"Paragould never experienced a boom, her growth being normal, steady and substantial. The nearest to a rush in population of the town was when the court house was removed, and the Jacksons, Macks, Stedmans, Hopkins, Lunas, Josephs, Grizzards, Glasscocks, Walls, Willcocksons, Wyse, and others, transferred their belongings from the old county seat to the new, in 1884."<sup>1</sup>

### POST OFFICE

As a part of a series of historical sketches, the *Soliphone*, on December 24, 1909, published a description of the first post office in Paragould, which is vivid, but probably exaggerated.

There was a post office with the pretty name of Beulah attached, situated on the main road from Gainesville southwest, kept by Christopher Ritter. Mail was brought twice a week from Gainesville, if the roads permitted, by a postman on horseback. The mail for Beulah was not heavy, as there was ample space to accommodate all of it, in a dry goods box about three feet square, with one or two partitions to expedite the placing of the different class mail matter in its appropriate pigeon hole. Mr. Ritter moved from his farm and established a meat market in Paragould and the Beulah post office was no more, while the Paragould post office after being kept at Mr. Ritter's stand for a short while, was moved from his place to a room near the present site of the steam laundry.

Chris was a typical Dutchman, big-hearted, jovial and industrious. He was nearly always rushed with customers and when a patron of the

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished manuscript, written in 1934.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

U. S. government called for his mail Chris did not always have time to wash his hands, and jumping from his customer who had just purchased a beef steak he would run to the mail box, which was kept in the butcher shop, and dish out the mail without any extra charge for the strings of steak that might hang on to the letters or for the bloody imprints made by his fingers. But little was thought of it then and the incident is only related to show the good fellowship that then existed among the people.

A similar description appeared in an article in the *Arkansas Gazette* in 1891:

There can be no more accurate standard by which to measure the growth of a town than the business of the post office. The Paragould post office has grown more rapidly in business than any other office in the State. The *Gazette* correspondent is indebted to Dr. J. S. Parke, the Postmaster, for the facts here given. Seven years ago the office was kept in a tent by Chris Ritter, a butcher, who waited on customers who came for their beefsteaks over the same counter that he handed out mail to the people. The mail handled was small and the butcher often found it convenient to keep the letter mail in his pockets until called for. In 1888 the office was advanced from a fourth class office to a Presidential office, and in 1890 the business of the office showed the receipts of the office to be \$2,700, and the salary of the postmaster was advanced to \$1,200. For the fiscal year ending June, 1891, the business of the office showed an increase of \$300 and the salary of the postmaster was advanced to \$1,300. With this rate of increase, Paragould will have a free delivery system in the next five years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, August 26, 1891, p. 8.

## *HISTORY OF PARAGOULD*

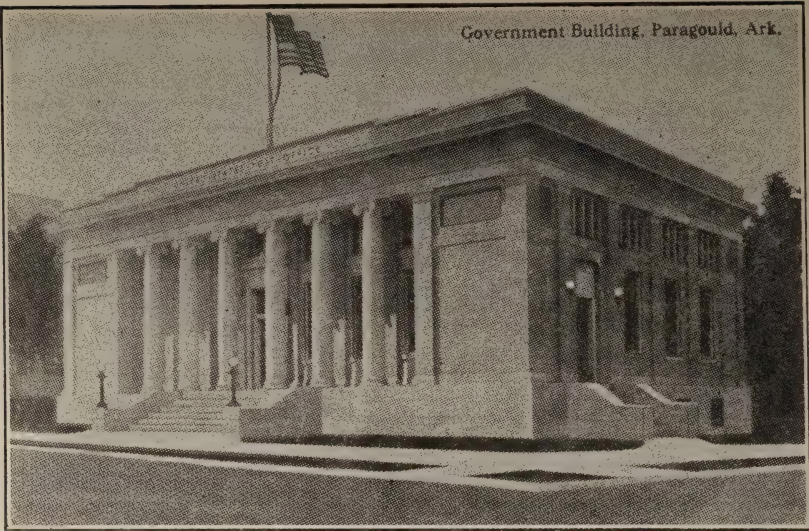
The first rural route in Greene County was laid out in the latter part of 1904, but was not actively established until February, 1905. Three other routes were established during the following year. The establishment of these rural routes automatically closed several small country post offices. Finch, Crowley, Bailey, Mack, Black Jack, Bethel, Halliday, Rice, Brighton, Lorado, and possibly other rural post offices were abolished.

Not understanding the rural route system of delivering the mail, many country people opposed its establishment, and refused to accept service at first, thinking they would have to pay if the mail was carried to their homes. It seemed too good to be true to have mail delivered daily to the front gate. They soon became adjusted to the new arrangement, however, and found other use for the time that had formerly been required to visit the village store for the week's mail.

City delivery service was established in Paragould November 16, 1908, with three carrier routes. Paragould now has five rural routes and five city routes, delivering mail daily in the country and twice a day within the city limits.

Through the efforts of Postmaster J. Harry McPherson, Editor J. R. Taylor, and Congressman Macon, an appropriation of \$50,000 was secured for the erection of a modern post office building. A location was secured at the corner of Court and Second streets, and the structure was started in 1912 and completed during the year 1913. In January, 1914, the building was first occupied.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY



PARAGOULD POST OFFICE

The Paragould post office became a first class office July 1, 1944. The receipts for the calendar year 1945 were \$60,016.39. The personnel now includes the postmaster, assistant postmaster, six office clerks, five city carriers, five rural carriers, two substitute clerks, two substitute carriers, and two custodian employees.

### ELECTRIC LIGHTS

The Paragould Electric Light and Power Company was incorporated November 19, 1891, with a capital stock of \$6,000, divided into shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were A. P. Mack, M. F. Collier, W. A. Sims, J. S. Parker, W. J. McDonald, H. W. Glasscock, W. H. Jones, J. D. Kilgore, H. S. Trice, J. F. Cardwell, W. A. H. McDaniel, E. B. Simons, W. W. Bandy, G. M. Rosengrant, W. C. Hasty, Richard Jackson, L. C. Thompson, L. L. Mack, A. A.



## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

Knox, J. R. Thompson, Thos. H. Wyse, C. Wall, N. Donaldson, S. L. Joseph, R. C. Grizzard, T. B. Kitchens, J. S. Blackshare, W. E. Baird, E. B. Perkins, Bertig Bros., H. J. Wrape, M. G. Newsom, Henry Wrape, Charley Wyse, A. Knight, T. W. and J. W. Crawford. Directors were T. H. Wyse (President), C. Wall (Vice-President), A. A. Knox (Secretary), M. F. Collier (Corresponding Secretary), Saul Bertig (Treasurer), W. C. Hasty, A. P. Mack, A. Bertig, W. J. Wyse.<sup>1</sup>

Minutes of the City Council on November 11, 1891, record an agreement whereby "Said Company would furnish the Town forty incandescent street lights in places selected by the Council, said lights to be fifty-four candle power and to burn till midnight on all dark nights for the sum of seventy-five dollars per month payable in Town script of face value; the Town to give as a bonus the sum of one thousand dollars face value in script to said Electric Company."<sup>2</sup>

An article in the *Arkansas Gazette* on February 5, 1892, stated that the electric system at Paragould had been placed in operation.

The Paragould Electric Light and Power Company contract was for a period of twenty years, from 1891 to 1911.<sup>3</sup> For the next five years, 1911 through 1915, electric power for homes and business establishments of Paragould was furnished by the Crystal Ice Company.

A lengthy controversy occurred over the high rates that were being charged. Finally the Mayor, H.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of City Council*, Book 1, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

M. Jackson, published in the local newspaper a letter dated March 8, 1915, quoting a new rate schedule offered by the Crystal Ice Company:

For the first 25 K.W.H. per month, 14c per K.W.H.  
For the next 25 K.W.H., 13c per K.W.H.  
For the next 50 K.W.H., 12c per K.W.H.  
For the next 100 K.W.H., 11c per K.W.H.  
For the next 100 K.W.H., 6c per K.W.H.  
For all over 300 K.W.H., 5c per K.W.H.

The following comparison of charges under the old and new schedules show the reduction made to consumers by the new rates:

25 K.W.H., old rate \$3.75; new rate \$3.50.  
50 K.W.H., old rate \$7.13; new rate \$6.75.  
75 K.W.H., old rate \$10.48; new rate \$9.75.  
100 K.W.H., old rate \$13.50; new rate \$12.60.  
200 K.W.H., old rate \$24.00; new rate \$23.75.  
300 K.W.H., old rate \$31.50; new rate \$29.75.

The reduction was small and belated. On December 20, 1915, the City Council awarded to the Arkansas Light and Power Company the contract for supplying electricity to the citizens of Paragould.<sup>1</sup> Uninterrupted service has been supplied through this channel under various names—Arkansas Light and Power Company, Arkansas Utilities, and Missouri Utilities.

Paragould celebrated July 4, 1916, by turning on seventy-six "White Way" street lights in the business district.<sup>2</sup>

A bond issue in the amount of \$100,000 was authorized by the voters of Paragould in 1933, the

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of City Council*, Book 3, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

proceeds to be used for the construction or purchase of a municipal electric plant and distribution system. Callable bonds, bearing interest at the rate of 4% per annum, were issued in March, 1933, but subsequent litigation delayed their sale until May 16, 1938, on which date they were disposed of at par. A special five mill ad valorem tax levy was made in 1939 for the liquidation of the bond issue. This levy was continued through 1942, at which time the revenue derived and the surplus available from the operation of the utility produced sufficient funds for the total amortization of the issue. All outstanding bonds were called for payment on March 20, 1944. Paragould is now free of bonded indebtedness.<sup>1</sup>

The City light and power plant has completed its seventh year of service to the citizens of Paragould, having been placed in operation on January 17, 1939. Starting operation in competition with the Missouri Utilities Company, which was at that time serving all consumers in the City, the plant now has a large percentage of the local business.

While the financial progress of the light plant has been very satisfactory, this alone does not represent all of the benefits derived by the City from its operation. More than two and one-half times the amount of street lighting used prior to 1939 is now being supplied. The value of this service, for which the utility receives no revenue, amounts to more than \$6,500 per year. The cost of current to consumers in Paragould has been materially reduced through the removal of the service charge, which was collected prior to 1939. This rep-

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<sup>1</sup> *Co-ordinated Public Improvement Program for Greene County, Arkansas, and the City of Paragould, Arkansas, 1944*, p. 30.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

resents a saving of approximately \$14,000 annually to consumers.

The Federal Power Commission report for 1943 gave Paragould credit for having the lowest rate of any city in Arkansas with a population under 10,000. The Ely-Walker Shirt Factory is the largest single industrial consumer and has suffered no interruption of service since City power has been used.<sup>1</sup>

The responsibility for the current and future operation of the City plant is vested in a Commission which is elected by the people. Present members of the Light Plant Commission are J. C. Ford, H. W. Woosley, C. H. Joyce, O. M. Atkins, and Donald Cox.

Uniform rates now offered by Missouri Utilities and the Municipal Light Company for residential lighting are:

First 30 K.W.H. at 5.3c per K.W.H.  
Next 30 K.W.H. at 4c per K.W.H.  
Over 60 K.W.H. at 2c per K.W.H.  
Minimum bill per month, 51c.

Reduced rates are allowed to residences using electricity for refrigeration or cooking, as follows:

First 35 K.W.H. at 4c per K.W.H.  
Next 65 K.W.H. at 2.8c per K.W.H.  
Over 100 K.W.H. at 1.8c per K.W.H.  
Minimum bill per month, 77c.

## WATER WORKS

The Paragould Oil, Gas, and Water Company was incorporated July 21, 1891, with a capital stock

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<sup>1</sup> Co-ordinated Public Improvement Program for Greene County, Arkansas, and the City of Paragould, Arkansas, 1944, p. 41.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

of \$3,000, divided into 120 shares of \$25 each. According to the incorporation papers, "The general nature of the business proposed to be transacted by this Corporation is the boring of a well on Lot 10 in Wall and Spoon's addition to the Incorporated Town of Paragould and the utilizing of Oil, Gas or Water that may be found by the boring of such well as the Incorporation hereof may direct. That is, if Oil or Gas is found the same may be stored, refined and sold on the market, and if Water is found the same may be utilized either by selling the same to any Ice Manufacturing Company or used in furnishing Water to any person or to the Incorporated Town of Paragould."

Stockholders were Dan O'Keefe, Jacob Spoon, A. Jackson, M. H. Wilkins, Jacob Lambert, C. W. Jackson, J. H. Moon, J. H. Bryant, M. L. Meriwether, W. F. Wohrman, C. Wall, W. H. Jones, Simon Jacobs, G. W. Cox, McConnell & Odam, M. R. Coffman, H. S. Trice, J. V. Landrum, G. H. Hull, P. H. Hammons, J. D. Spencer, W. Marlow, J. W. Corbin, T. H. Wyse, J. R. Thompson, W. W. Bandy, L. R. Potter, A. G. Dickson, Wyatt Mooring, E. A. Shaw, A. P. Cox, W. S. Pruet, Zack Eatman, George Weese, Pennock & Peterson, J. R. Miller, W. T. Witherington, J. D. Kilgore, W. H. Hicks, J. Miller, C. W. Dietz, J. T. Hampton, S. L. Joseph, J. W. Crawford, Ben M. Hagey, W. H. Gallamore, S. R. Simpson, W. H. Huntsman, H. W. Glasscock, L. C. Thompson, J. T. Hopkins, Joseph Bleier, W. S. Barker, George Owens, I. D. Bard, David Good, A. B. Hays, J. D. Maddox, W. W. Clay, J. W. Lawson, A. Knight, Phelps Bros., H. L. Bramlet, J. H. Richards, J. T. Harrington, F. R. Clark, D. C. Houston, C. F. Brown, A. House, W. A.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Sims, T. R. Willcockson, M. F. Collier, J. R. Perkins, A. A. Knox, W. E. Baird, J. M. Hampton, G. M. Rosengrant. Directors were C. Wall (President), S. R. Simpson, J. R. Perkins, L. C. Thompson, A. Knight, Thos. H. Wyse, Jacob Spoon.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the turn of the century, the citizens of Paragould started planning for a city-owned and operated water plant and distributing service. The present property was constructed in three major construction periods, as follows:

On September 15, 1898, Water Improvement District No. 1 was formed. Bonds in the amount of \$28,000 for construction of a water plant and distributing system were issued. Construction was started and completed in the year 1899. The mains which were installed at that time are still in use, as is the original building and land. Plant machinery has been retired.

Water Improvement District No. 2 was organized in 1915, and bonds in the amount of \$25,000 were issued to provide funds for additions to the distribution system and the construction of an overhead storage tank. The tank has since been removed.

A third district, known as Water Improvement District No. 3, was formed in 1923 and bonds in the amount of \$132,000 were issued. Construction thus financed consisted of the water plant and building, one additional well and boilers and steam-driven generators for an electric power plant, which has since been removed. A major portion of the building constructed at that time is still in use, now being occupied by the Municipal electric plant.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 96.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

In addition to the construction financed through bonds issued by the various improvement districts, property additions and improvements have been financed from time to time out of the revenues derived from the operation of the property. In 1929 the program of installing meters was started, and was completed some time in 1930 or 1931. Since that time, all customers have been served through meters.

An appraisal of all property of the Paragould water works was made by the State Department of Public Utilities in 1943. The total value, based on original cost less deduction of accrued depreciation, was established at approximately one quarter of a million dollars. The utility, with all the monetary and public service value represented, is now free of debt, and is the property of the citizens of Paragould.<sup>1</sup>

The affairs of the water works are controlled by a Commission, whose members are elected by the people. Present members of the Commission are Al Wrape, Walter Ellis, Russell Mack, Joe Kirchoff, Harold Scott, R. A. Reynolds, and Cecil Mitchell.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

It is interesting to trace the history of the Paragould Fire Department, as shown in the minutes of the City Council.

November 11, 1892:

The Incorporated Town of Paragould has purchased from the Howe Pump and Engine Company, of St. Louis, Missouri, a hand-pump

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<sup>1</sup> Co-ordinated Public Improvement Program for Greene County, Arkansas, and the City of Paragould, Arkansas, 1944, p. 43.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY



PARAGOULD'S FIRST FIRE DEPARTMENT

fire engine and hook and ladder outfit, combining water and chemicals for the destruction of fire. The purchase price was \$720.00.

November 30, 1892:

The contract is let to Mont Phelps for \$290.00 to build a house, 45' x 12', for the fire engine, to be built on the north side of the City Hall lot, and to contain a belfry 24' high and 4' square.

January 25, 1893:

Motion was made and carried that the town council offer a prize of two dollars and fifty cents to the teamster who first gets to the Engine house upon the sound of a fire alarm and then with team hauls the engine and trucks to the fire, and then returns same after the fire to the Engine house.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

March 22, 1893:

Moved by L. C. Thompson, which motion carried, that the recorder buy six coats, twelve hats, and twelve badges for the Paragould Fire Company, of the kind and sizes as said company may suggest, and to have a hose reel made for the fire engine.

March 19, 1917:

In accordance with a contract dated October 16, 1916, the City Clerk is authorized to issue notes totaling \$5,370.00 to the American La-France Fire Engine Company, of Elmira, New York, as the purchase price of their "Type 20 Combination Fire Truck," which fire truck has been delivered, found to be satisfactory, and is hereby accepted.

The question of taking care of the Fire Team was taken up and discussed. It was the sense of the Council and a motion was made that Street Commissioner have charge of the team to work on the streets and that he be instructed in case of a fire alarm to send team to the barn at once and to keep them there until such time as they are released by Fire Chief.

The committee appointed to dispose of the third Fire Horse had to report that they had no bids on the horse but could trade him in on a sprinkler owned by Lee Retherford.

## TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The Paragould Telephone Company was incorporated May 14, 1896, with a capital stock of \$1,000, divided into forty shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were M. F. Collier, T. Hoffman, A. A. Knox, W. T. Witherington, W. G. Collier, and E. S. Bray. M. F.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Collier was chosen President; A. A. Knox, Vice-President; and E. S. Bray, Secretary and Treasurer. Articles of incorporation stated that the company was formed "for the purpose of erecting, maintaining and operating a telephone system in the City of Paragould, Greene County, Arkansas, and to extend the same into Craighead and Clay Counties, when practicable to do so."<sup>1</sup>

Eugene Collier was the first manager, and Mrs. Minnie Lambert Noble and Mrs. Theo Meriwether (Mrs. J. A. White) were the first Central operators. Mrs. Noble states that she remembers that there were one hundred fifty phones of the box-and-crank type in the beginning. She handled all calls for the one hundred fifty phones during the daytime, eating her lunch in the telephone office, and Mrs. Meriwether kept the office during the night. Some of the early linesmen were Tom Mack, Bonner Davis, and Tom Collier.

The first Central office was located in the upstairs of the building now occupied by Schaaf Variety Store, on the southeast corner of Pruett and Emerson streets. The switchboard and instruments were of Kellogg manufacture. The outside plant consisted of about three hundred feet of armored cable used to connect the central office to the junction poles. Native poles were used, with twelve pin arms, white knobs, and iron wire.

On September 1, 1901, the Central office was moved to the front room upstairs, over Grizzard's Drug Store.<sup>2</sup> When the Paragould Telephone Company surrendered its charter on January 31, 1905, the stockholders were J. E. Farnsworth (118 shares), T.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 257.

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

L. Powell (one share), and F. B. Deshon (one share).<sup>1</sup> The exchange was then purchased by the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. At that time there were about two hundred telephones.

Records of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company indicate that in 1911 the office was moved to the present quarters at 113 East Emerson Street, and a common battery No. 9 switchboard was installed. At that time there were about four hundred stations. There were two open wires leads, one six-arm twelve-pin running six blocks west, and one eight-arm lead from West Court and Pruett streets. These leads were replaced by cable in 1913. Some of the employees in 1911 were J. D. Burke, Plant Chief; Ralph Martin, Wire Chief; Elmer Hogler, Chief Operator; Theo Meriwether, Cashier; D. R. Comel, Manager; with the following operators: Amelia Warren, Mollie Jackson, Pearl Gruber, Jessie Legon, Agnes Perry, Mildred Perry, and Nellie Poindexter.

On July 1, 1945, there were 1,310 telephones, served by twenty-three operators. By August 1, 1946, there were 1,580 telephones and twenty-nine operators.

### CITY COUNCIL

Interesting sidelights on the history of Paragould are reflected in the minutes of the City Council at various dates:

May 18, 1885:

Motion made that the Marshal be instructed to employ a wagon and haul all the loose plank at the street crossings and pile same up on the City lot.

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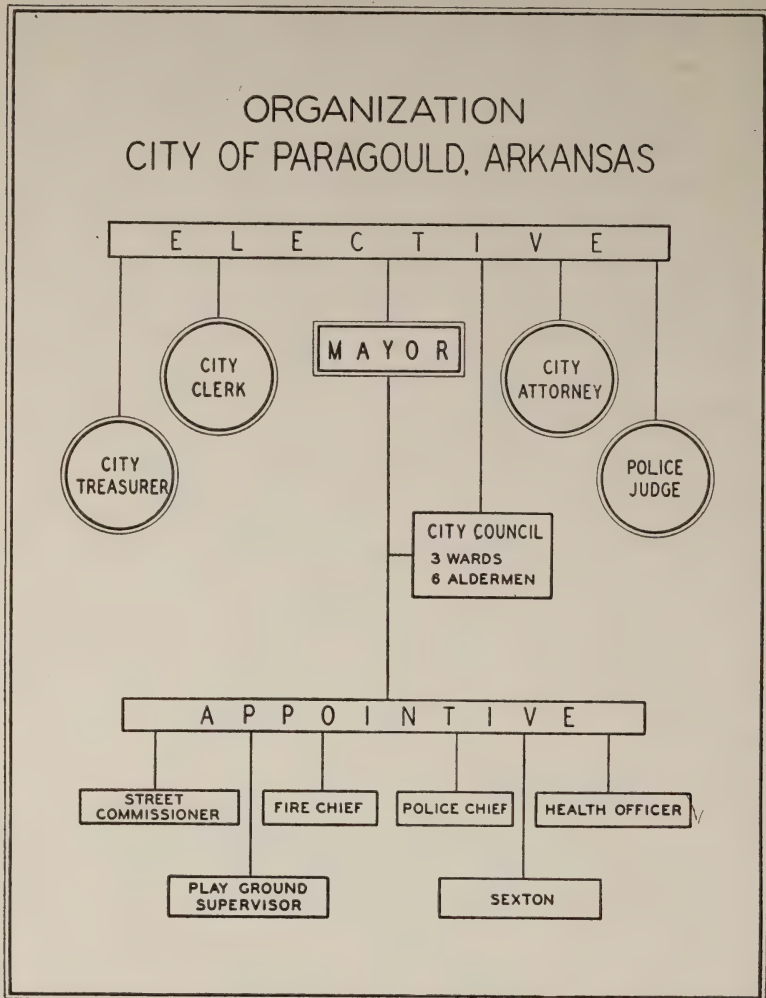
<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 392.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Motion made that a committee be appointed to draft plan and select a place to build a dog pound and also instruct Marshal to build the same at the expense of the Incorporation.

July 6, 1885:

Claims presented . . . D. B. Warren \$50.00 for services rendered in securing and having the Town of Paragould incorporated.



## *HISTORY OF PARAGOULD*

July 20, 1885:

The Mayor appointed J. L. Ware and Jack Dunagan a committee to see after the Grave Yard belonging to the Town.

Motion made and carried that the Recorder be instructed and empowered to rent a room for the use of the Council.

April 6, 1886:

The City Council voted to donate \$50.00 towards the purchase of instruments for a brass band for the town.

December 20, 1886:

It was also declared by the Council that J. R. Taylor be allowed \$25 for taking census of the Incorporated Town of Paragould—publishing an account of the history and resources of the town, and furnishing the mayor one thousand copies of the issue containing said census and description of town.

December 27, 1886:

Special committee being called for, J. H. Bryant reported purchase of a pump for the public well on corner of Court and Pruett streets.

March 13, 1889:

Specifications were given for sidewalks in Paragould:

Side walks to be six feet wide with four stringers. Boards to be of Cypress or Pine not less than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches thick and from 6 to 10 inches wide and nailed if six inches wide with 8 nails and if over six inches wide with twelve nails



## *HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*

to the board. Stringers to be 2 x 6 inches and of white oak, to be well spliced and securely nailed, and to be placed on pieces 2 x 6 inches, placed every 6 feet and extending entirely across.

August 6, 1890:

City Council accepted bid for \$1,198.00 of Jake Dardinger for the brick work for a City Hall and Calaboose for Town of Paragould.

July 29, 1891:

On motion, F. R. Clark was appointed and employed to clean out the public well and the mayor appointed G. H. Hull and W. J. McDonald to purchase a pump for same.

March 9, 1892:

The street commissioner was ordered to repair the ditch that runs by the store of Meriwether & Son.

April 15, 1892:

The following is the bid of W. L. Lawrence which was accepted by the Council: "From May till September I will do the Scavenger work of private houses at 20 cents per month, and the remaining part of the year at 15 cents per month."

February 8, 1893:

Census taker J. C. Crowell reported he had taken the census of the town complete as instructed to do and reports the population as 2,528.

April 5, 1893:

City Council paid \$196.85 to the Moseley Safe Company for a safe for the City Hall.

A typical box house of sixty years ago was described in the minutes of the Paragould City Coun-

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

cil on January 25, 1886, which gave the following specifications for a home for the sexton of the cemetery:

House to be 28 feet long and 14 feet wide and 12 feet high with a shed room 10 x 14. There shall be a partition run through the center of the main building making two rooms 14 x 14 feet. The foundation shall consist of sills not less than 6 x 8 inches and joists 2 x 8 inches and joined into sills. Said foundation shall be placed on blocks of good sound white oak. The walls shall be boxed with rough boards and stripped on the outside. Cornice shall be made plain with rough boards. The floors shall be laid with matched flooring well dry. All the rooms shall be ceiled overhead with matched ceiling well dry. There shall be five windows 12 x 16, eight lights, and four panel doors 2' 10" x 6' 10" and hung with good hinges and good locks put on all the doors. The roof shall be of good boards and well sapped, 24 inches long and laid 8 inches to the weather. There shall be two flues made of brick and built so that they will be at least two and one-half feet above the roof. All work to be in good workmanlike manner and the work completed by the 15th of March, 1886.

The contract for this house was let to Frank Tilley for \$139.50.

## DICKSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Dr. Graham Dickson had desired for a long time to have a building in which he might care for patients needing special attention. When the railroad shops were moved to Paragould in 1905, he felt that the need was imperative. An undated newspaper clipping, written on the completion of the hospital, gave the history of the building.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

The site of the doctor's own home was selected as the location for the structure. The dwelling house was at once rolled from the yard and the rose bushes and shrubbery removed, and on the 1st of May, 1906, the work of excavating and placing the material on the grounds began.

The plans and specifications for the great structure were drawn by the doctor himself, and Tol Ware was engaged as foreman of the work of construction.

Counting the massive concrete basement walls, the structure is five stories high, and is covered with a Mansard roof. There are thirty-three rooms in the sanitarium, and wide halls extend through the center of the building from north to south on each floor. The building is heated by a furnace, lighted by electricity, and equipped on all floors with phones and electric call systems.

The sanitarium was completed and opened to the public on February 1, 1907. Its erection and equipment cost thirty thousand dollars.

Dr. A. G. Dickson, the founder, died January 27, 1909. The Paragould Sanitarium Comuany was incorporated March 27, 1909, for "the operation and maintenance of a sanitarium for the treatment of diseases, both medical and surgical (except contagious diseases), also for the maintaining of a school of training for nurses." The capital stock was \$31,000, divided into 1,240 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were H. N. Dickson, Paul L. Dickson, Sarah M. Dickson, H. S. Trice, Olive Wilson, Richard Jackson, J. Madden Smith, F. S. Wrape, Christine McFarland, J. D. Block. Directors were H. N. Dickson (Presi-

## HISTORY OF PARAGOULD

dent), Paul L. Dickson (Vice-President), Sarah M. Dickson (Secretary).<sup>1</sup>

The name was changed to Dickson Memorial Hospital on January 14, 1920.<sup>2</sup>

### OTHER HOSPITALS

The former home of John R. Thompson, at 316 North Second Street, was purchased by Dr. G. R. McClure in 1934, and remodeled to make a sixteen-bed general hospital, known as The Paragould Hospital. Dr. F. A. Poe has recently purchased the Whitsitt residence, corner of Second and Emerson streets, and remodeled it as a clinic.

In 1941, through donations of local citizens and a grant from the federal government, The Community Hospital was started, located on West Kingshighway. Anticipated cost was \$100,000 for the building and a like amount for equipment. Because of the war, construction was stopped with the building eighty per cent complete, and lacking equipment. Negotiations are under way for the hospital to be completed and turned over to a recognized hospital board for operation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Articles of Incorporation*, Book 4, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Articles of Incorporation*, Book 5, p. 279.



## CHAPTER V

### FOUR WARS

#### CIVIL WAR

THE HISTORY of Greene County's part in the Civil War is well told in Goodspeed's "Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas."

At the outbreak of the Civil War of 1861-65, the citizens of Greene County, being mostly immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the former slave-holding states, were found to be almost to a man, in full sympathy with the Southern cause, and consequently lent their energies to sustain it. As might be expected, great excitement then prevailed, and in the spring of 1861 Capt. W. G. Bohaning raised a full company of soldiers mostly in the territory now composing Greene County, for the First Regiment of Arkansas Confederate Infantry. Soon thereafter Capt. J. L. Kuykendall formed another company for the Twenty-Fifth Regiment of Arkansas Confederate Infantry. In 1864 Capts. Park Willcockson, John McHenry and H. W. Glasscock, each raised a company of cavalry in Greene County for Maj. J. F. Davies' battalion of Col. Kitchens' regiment. The population being then small, these were the only organized bodies of soldiers raised in that part of the county as it is now composed. Other troops were obtained in that portion since set off to Clay. No skirmishes or battles took place in the county during the war, and it was but little over-run with soldiers, consequently not suffering the devastations incident to many other counties in the State.

## FOUR WARS

Only two Federal commands, together with a few small scouting parties, passed through the county, and as a result the people fortunately escaped the raids of foragers; owing also to their unanimity of sentiment, there was but very little bushwhacking done. In addition to the companies above mentioned, some individuals went out of the county and enlisted in other commands. Notwithstanding the natural preferences of the people here in the war period, they are now vying with the immigrants from both North and South, in developing the resources of this section. Universal peace and harmony prevail, and all just and upright newcomers are received with a hearty welcome. The survivors of both armies have organized an association in Paragould known as the "Blue and Gray"—there being many ex-Federal soldiers among the recent arrivals in the county, and together they meet and rejoice that the conflict is forever settled, and that while they were enemies in war they are friends in peace.<sup>1</sup>

R. W. Meriwether has a picture, made about 1900, showing sixty-eight Greene County residents who had served in the Confederate Army. Many of these men had enlisted from other states, and moved to Arkansas long after the cessation of the war. Those included in the picture were: T. J. Edwards, John McHaney, Andy Webb, Dr. M. L. Meriwether, Wake Stuart, P. W. Moss, B. H. Crowley, R. H. Gardner, L. McHaney, J. M. Huddleston, A. C. Griffin, John Burnette, A. Yarbrough, O. S. Newsome, John Lytle, Wm. Marlowe, N. R. Hampton, F. N. Daulton, Dr. Graham, Mack Wadley, Prof. R. S. Thompson, W. T. Thorn, Dave Weaver, R. A. Courtney, L. C. Thomp-

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 119.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

son, B. F. Bibbs, Wm. Weatherley, J. N. Johnson, John Slatton, W. C. Gramling, Wright Weatherley, Charley Forsythe, Adam Yow, J. W. Langley, A. B. Hays, Bob Bolin, A. Walker, W. S. Pruett, Bob Rutledge, John Turner, John Cravens, Dr. Burton, W. H. Waldron, John Clark, Smith Burton, Jim Thompson. Ison Seits, Jim Douglas, A. T. Chaffin, John Brinkley, Frank McLemore, Perry Hyde, W. W. Pate, Frances Hyde, R. A. Cole, Bob Gilbert, Peter Reeves, D. L. Fitzgerald, W. B. Harvey, R. Bratton, H. Weatherley, John O'Steen, W. H. Holleman, Carey Cole, and Robert Pruett.

### SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Many citizens of Greene County can remember the farewell parties given in the spring of 1898 for the young men who volunteered for duty in the Spanish-American War. Mrs. Elizabeth Moore states that she served ten gallons of ice cream to soldiers who came to her home for a farewell party.

An undated clipping, evidently from the *Soliphone*, describes the departure of one hundred men, most of them from Greene County. Capt. P. W. Moss was at the head of the company. Only about two-thirds of the men were uniformed and armed. They had been in temporary camp for one week, prior to their departure for Little Rock.

Two coaches were side-tracked at Paragould by the Cotton Belt Railroad. Word came at noon on a Saturday for the soldiers to leave. Messengers were sent over town to assemble patriotic citizens, and about one thousand men and women gathered on Pruett

## FOUR WARS

Street in front of the Stancill House at 6 p. m. to bid the boys goodbye.

Captain Moss led his company in a review. The words of the newspaper are quoted here: "The playing of the band, the waving of handkerchiefs, flags, hats, and the loud huzzas from a thousand throats and the booming of an improvised cannon created a scene that can never be forgotten by those present." Speeches were made by Dr. Parker, Mrs. A. A. Knox, M. P. Huddleston, S. R. Simpson, C. E. Richardson, and B. H. Crowley. The Cotton Belt passenger train going south at 7:27 hitched on the coaches and the boys moved off to Little Rock.

The American victory at Santiago on July 17, 1898, caused much excitement in Greene County, as evidenced by the following clipping from the local newspaper.

Patriotism was at high tide in Paragould Wednesday night. There was a demonstration commemorative of the American victory at Santiago. At 7:30 o'clock the whistles at all the factories broke loose and pandemonium reigned for half an hour. The band played national airs and there was a beautiful pyrotechnic display. A large crowd assembled at the court house and the yard was a lively scene, the band playing, anvils booming and skyrockets lighting up the elements. A number of our local orators were expected to make speeches, but none of them could be called to the balcony of the court house, where it was intended that the speakers should stand, and hence there was no speaking. With this exception the demonstration was a success and gave evidence of the patriotic sentiments of the people of Paragould. Paragould has furnished more volunteers



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

for the army than any other town of like size in the state and her people have shown more enthusiasm, in a public way, over the grand succession of American victories on land and sea than any other town of its size in the state.

### WORLD WAR I

The first group to leave Greene County for service in World War I was Company H, composed of one hundred twenty-five young men of the county. They had been drilled for a time on the old High School grounds, and were sent to Fort Roots, Little Rock, on September 10, 1917, under the command of Captain J. C. Shane, First Lieutenant John T. Batten, and Second Lieutenant Hays Porter. *The Paragould Daily Press* of September 10, 1917, described the departure of the group.

Greene County's contribution to the success of our war with Germany has been made. This morning just before eight o'clock, one hundred and twenty-five picked young men, representing almost every township in the county, boarded a southbound Cotton Belt train on the first lap of their long journey to the trenches in France. From Paragould they go direct to Fort Roots near Little Rock for a period of training. Some time, we do not know just when, and the government itself does not know exactly, they will be placed on transports and sent across the Atlantic Ocean to fight side by side with men from Great Britain, France and other allied nations.

Most of the boys were anxious to be off. They had tired of the routine of camp life on the High School grounds, where nothing more inspiring than an occasional drill broke the monotony of the long days.

## FOUR WARS

More than two thousand people from Paragould, and many from the surrounding townships, were at the depot to pay tribute to the members of Company H. Factory whistles and the blare of automobile horns added to the intensity of the demonstration.

Records of the American Legion indicate that approximately four hundred seventy-six men went from Greene County to serve in World War I. The first local meeting of the American Legion was held in the Vandervoort Hotel, with eighteen charter members. R. P. Taylor was chosen as the first Commander. A charter was granted on July 15, 1919, to the Adams Jackson Post of the American Legion, named in memory of Adams Jackson, the first young man from Greene County to die in action in World War I. The local American Legion Auxiliary was organized in 1925.

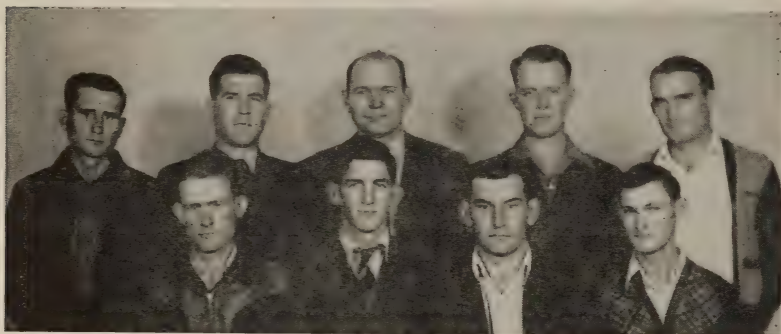
A monument has been erected on the Court House lawn "To the Men of Greene County Who Served in the World War and in Memory of Those Who Made the Supreme Sacrifice." Forty names are listed on the monument. They are: Ranzie Adams, Lon Austin, Charles J. Barnett, Jimmie Bonds, Arlin Boone, Luther E. Bowlin, William B. Brooks, Chesser W. Brown, Don P. Brown, Jack Brown, James Chestnut, Wilmer L. Childers, Adla S. Chitwood, Oscar R. Clayton, Fred C. Costen, Earl D. Cothren, Arthur P. Crow, Hubert L. Cupples, John DeBoe, Clarence W. Depew, Elbert E. Dixon, Walter Dollar, Richard Easter, Amos W. Fitzgerald, Olen Fletcher, Wesley Foster, Jack Good, George A. Hopper, John Howe, Adams Jackson, Hollie J. Layman, Walter L. Meador, John H.

• HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Noel, Charlie Riley, Isaac A. Stover, Jessie J. Sutton, Arlie E. Walters, John W. Watson, Murry M. Watwood, Alvie C. Weatherford.

## WORLD WAR II

Greene County did its part in sending soldiers, sailors, and marines to help in World War II. There were 7,182 men, ages eighteen through forty-five, who registered subject to call. The number of men inducted was 1,949. To this number should be added 395 volunteers, giving a total of 2,344 men who went into service from Greene County. During one month in 1943, there were 364 men sent from Greene County.<sup>1</sup>



FIRST GROUP TO LEAVE GREENE COUNTY  
November 22, 1940

Top row, center, is J. Sam Thompson, Chief Clerk, Selective Service. Others, left to right, top row, Carl Waits, Leonard Spillman, Jerome Graham Fletcher, Alvin Woodroe Campbell. Bottom row, Virley M. Lamb, Ellis H. Roe, Edgar Floyd Williams, Arthur Lewis Arnold.

The War Department has released a list of fifty men from Greene County who were missing or killed in action. According to local Selective Service officials, this list is incomplete, and will probably include

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<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by local Selective Service headquarters.

## FOUR WARS

about seventy-five men in the final total. No information has been released on casualties from the Navy and the Marines.

The War Department's first list of Army casualties from Greene County includes the following men: Pvt. Robert C. Ahlf, Pvt. Victor W. Baker, Pvt. Wesley A. Baty, Pvt. Allen R. Beaver, Pfc. Earl L. Bishop, Pfc. Jim C. Blagg, Pfc. Harley W. Blankenship, Pvt. Jack D. Bridges, First Lieut. James E. Browning, Pfc. Woodrow L. Bruce, Pfc. James S. Butler, Staff Sgt. Henry N. Cathey, Second Lieut. Guy W. Cobb Jr., Pvt. Woodson B. Crawford, Pvt. Dewey Dowdy, Pvt. William C. Eaker, Tech. Sgt. Herschel S. Fahr, Pfc. Ezra F. Farmer, Pvt. John N. Faulkner, Pvt. Leslie H. Freeman, Staff Sgt. Walter S. Gardner, Sgt. Wilson M. Hall, Pfc. Crillon A. Hass, Pvt. Walter C. Hathcock, T-5 Archie Henson, T-5 Melvin Hilburn, Pfc. Richard J. Hopkins, Pvt. Eugene Johnson, Sgt. Robert T. Johnson, Tech. Sgt. Harold P. Kennedy, Staff Sgt. Milbern F. Lovelady, Pvt. E. H. McMurtry Jr., T-5 Woodrow Miller, Second Lieut. Emmett L. Moore, Staff Sgt. Rudy S. Myers Jr., Cpl. Hubert G. Ogles, Cpl. Vowell G. Parrish, Tech. Sgt. James L. Payne, Sgt. Robert E. Pierce, Pfc. Claude C. Roberson, Pfc. Lois E. Shatley, Pfc. James C. Staggs, T-5 Virgil A. Straub, Pvt. William A. Sullinger, Pfc. Arel Vines, Cpl. Robert E. Walker, Flight Officer Robert L. Williams, Pfc. Dallas W. Wilson, Pvt. Jimmie W. Wogman, Pfc. John G. Yates.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Commercial Appeal*, July 1, 1946, p. 18.



## CHAPTER VI

### CHURCHES

#### THE METHODIST CIRCUIT RIDER

THE METHODIST circuit rider was the first preacher to come to Greene County. In the early days, the country was thinly settled and churches were few. Religious services were held in log houses, private homes, school houses, brush arbors, or even blacksmith shops. The school and the church usually went hand in hand. If there was a meeting house in a community, it also served for a school house, and the preacher and the teacher might be the same person. There were no costly church houses, comfortable parsonages, or highly paid pastors. The circuit rider served a large territory, traveled on horseback, preached once a month at each charge on his circuit, and lived among the people he served.

When not teaching the children, the circuit rider married the young people, baptized the converts, conducted funerals, and often wrote wills and drew up other legal instruments for the people, without compensation other than board and keep. Weddings were conducted in the homes of the brides, and were solemn affairs. Only ordained ministers could perform marriage rites. As the anxious couples had to await the regular appointment of the preacher, there was no marrying in haste to repent at leisure.

The circuit rider was not required in those days to have a classical education, nor to be a profound orator. He was required to be a good man, with a

## CHURCHES

divine call to the ministry. He commanded the utmost respect of the people among whom he labored. What the circuit rider lacked in education and talent, he more than made up in industry, religious zeal, and close walk with God.

There were poor roads and no bridges over the streams in those days. All travel was done on horseback or afoot. Much of the country was covered with timber and standing water. Often streams had to be crossed by horse and rider, regardless of the season of the year. Homes were far apart, trails were indistinct and uncertain, and wild animals roamed the forests.

Besides a trusty horse, the circuit rider owned a pair of saddle bags in which he carried his Bible, hymn-book, change of linen, and sometimes a gun. He preached long sermons on such texts as: Judgment Day, Eternal Punishment, The Resurrection, Future Recognition, Original Sin, Love of God, and the Immortality of the Soul. Hearing only one sermon a month, the people did not complain at a two-hours' discourse.

The circuit rider was a welcome guest in the homes of the early settlers. He was given the best room and all the good things to eat, so long as he desired to remain in the home. On the religious frontier of the new country, the Methodist circuit rider was one of the first and most useful pioneers.

## SOME PIONEER METHODISTS

Some of the more prominent pioneer families of Methodists in the County were listed in the "Centennial History of Arkansas Methodism."

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

There have long been staunch Methodists in Greene County. One of the earliest was Captain Crowley, from whom Crowley's Ridge took its name, and from whom descended a rather large connection; the Cothern family in the Warren's Chapel community; the Gramlings, Spillmans, Selfs and Gregorys in the Stanford community; the Diggs and the McDaniel families at Wood's Chapel; the McKelveys and the Blaylocks at Campground; the Johnsons, the Martins, Dr. Wyse, and the Yeargain family at Gainesville; the Bradshers, the Burks and the Vowells at Marmaduke; J. P. Thompson's family, the Days, the Ellingtons, at New Liberty; J. H. Breckenridge, Revs. E. R. Stalcup and George Butler and the Williamsses at Beech Grove.<sup>1</sup>

### EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES

When J. D. J. Faulkner came to Northeast Arkansas in 1874, there were seven Baptist churches in Greene County: Mt. Zion, Finch, Spring Grove, Fairview, Frindship, Providence, and Hopewell. He says that there were only five Baptist preachers in the county then, and that three of them were rather old men.

In those days, each church had its little Sunday School from two to five months in the summer. There were no meetings in the winter because of bad roads and unheated buildings. There was no special literature, such as we have today. Parents took the old-fashioned Blue Back speller along as a textbook for the children. The adults studied the Bible, following a definite plan, beginning in Genesis and carrying through the principal stories of the Bible. The preacher

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<sup>1</sup> James A. Anderson, *Centennial History of Arkansas Methodism*, p. 509.

## CHURCHES

met with the church one week-end in each month, preaching Saturday, Saturday night, Sunday, and Sunday night. The churches were log houses, sometimes with puncheon floors. The benches were split logs, with legs stuck into auger holes. A few churches had fireplaces, but none boasted of a heating stove.

Rev. J. D. J. Faulkner furnished, from memory, the information for the following sketches.<sup>1</sup>

Mt. Zion Church was organized in 1840 by Rev. William Nutt.

Fairview Church was organized in 1857. William Smith and wife, Mr. Bobo and wife, Mr. Duncan and wife, Mr. Gulley and wife and son, were among the charter members. John Pierce was the first pastor.

Pleasant Grove Church at Finch was organized in 1872, with Thomas D. Lloyd as first pastor. Some of the charter members were Obadiah Newsom and wife, Robert Arnold and wife, W. D. Hester and wife.

The church at Friendship was organized in 1866. John Pierce was first pastor there. Charter members were Wiley Thorn and wife, John McHaney and wife, Samuel Burton and wife, Mrs. Jane Sexton, Mrs. Charity Burton, Mr. Shearer and wife.

The church at Unity was organized in 1879. J. F. Mills was the first pastor. Wash Riley and wife, William Riley and wife, Mr. Harper and wife and two daughters, and Wright Weatherly and wife, were charter members.

Epsaba Church was organized in 1875 by Rev. J. T. Edwards. Rev. G. H. Faulkner was pastor of

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, July 29, 1946.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

that church for forty years, and his son, J. D. J. Faulkner, was pastor for ten years. The charter members there were James Hardy and wife, Joe Thorn and wife, Matt Thorn, John Thorn, James Thorn, Mary Thorn, Anna Thorn, Emma Thorn, Carey Cole, and Dowd Cole.

Union Grove Church was organized in 1876, with J. T. Edwards as first pastor. G. H. Faulkner and wife, J. D. J. Faulkner, D. L. Fitzgerald and wife, Col. A. B. Johnson and wife, Mrs. Martha Gramling, Mrs. Sarah Rowe, and James Troy and wife, were charter members.

Center Hill Church was organized in 1883, with J. D. J. Faulkner as first pastor. Some of the charter members were John Craven and wife and son, John Turner and wife and daughter, and Mitt Grooms and wife.

Providence Church is one of the oldest churches of the county. Hezekiah Wright and wife, Newton



A BAPTIZING IN EIGHT MILE CREEK

## CHURCHES

Wright, Jasper Wright, Squire Bohannon, James Lax and wife, Benjamin Lax, Elija Haneline and wife, and Mrs. Tabitha Rutledge, were charter members.

## CHURCHES OF TODAY

Some of the organized denominations represented in Greene County at the present time are: Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Christian, Church of Christ, Church of God, Nazarene, Church of Jesus Christ, Oneness, Full Gospel, and Pentecost.

Greene County Missionary Baptist Association includes the following churches: Alexander's Chapel, Beech Grove, Bethel Station, Brighton, Big Creek, Brown's Chapel, Cache Valley, Center Hill, Childress Chapel, Delaplaine, Epsaba, Eight Mile, Fairview, Fontaine, Harmony, Lafe, Marmaduke, New Friendship, New Hope, New Liberty, Paragould First, Paragould East Side, Pleasant Grove, Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Valley, Robb's Chapel, Rock Hill, Stanford, Stonewall, Spring Grove, Union Grove, Unity, Village, Vine's Chapel, Walcott, and Wall's Chapel.

Methodist churches in Greene County include: Bard, Beech Grove, Camp Ground, Five Oaks, Gainesville, Griffin Memorial (Paragould East Side), Harvey's Chapel, Hurricane, Marmaduke, Morning Star, New Liberty, Oak Grove, Old Friendship, Paragould First, Pleasant Grove, Pleasant Hill (Lorado), Pruett's Chapel, Ramer's Chapel, Rock Springs, Scatter Creek, Shiloh, Stanford, Warren's Chapel, and Wood's Chapel.

Obviously, it would be too great a task to trace the history of every church in the county. As many

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

historical sketches as could be located have been included in this chapter. There are enough to show the general trend of church life through more than a century of Greene County history.

### MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

Mt. Zion Church, the oldest Baptist church in Greene County, was organized in 1840 by Elder William Nutt at the residence of Wiley Hutchins. Charter members were Wiley Hutchins and wife, Sterling Newsum and wife, S. W. Roberts and wife, R. Dennis and wife, Archibald Jones and wife, and John Ferguson and wife. At first, church was held in the log school house. Since that time there have been three church buildings, one of which burned, and one of which was destroyed by a storm. Mt. Zion Association was organized at Mt. Zion Church in 1852. Four churches have been organized by members of Mt. Zion Church. They are: Shady Grove, Walcott, Cache Valley, and Lorado.<sup>1</sup>

### BEECH GROVE METHODIST CHURCH

Beech Grove Methodist Church was organized about 1850 by Rev. H. M. Granade. J. H. Breckenridge had been the Sunday School superintendent for forty-two years when he wrote a brief history of the church in 1942. He stated that the charter members of the church consisted of A. J. Breckenridge and wife, Elizabeth; Joe Friar and wife, Nancy; Henry Lovelady and wife, Sarah; David Breckenridge and wife; George Taylor and wife, Naoma; and Jess Williams

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. R. C. Medaris, *Historical Sketch of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Greene County, Arkansas*, October 1, 1927.

## CHURCHES

and wife. The first church was built of logs, with chimney, puncheon floor, and split log seats. The Civil War interfered, but was followed by a revival of church activity. There were about fifty members in 1876, when the second church was built—a box house 24' x 36'. The third church building was started about the year 1900. It was a frame building 30' x 50', with tower and a bell weighing 500 pounds. Beside it was a tabernacle 50' x 60', used for Sunday School and summer revivals. This church burned in 1938, and was replaced by a \$5,000 stucco structure, 30' x 56', with full-size basement. In 1942 there were 154 members of the church.<sup>1</sup>

### HARVEY'S CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

Before there was even a school house at what is now Harvey's Chapel, meetings were held at Edmonston's home. The first report from Edmonston's was given in 1859. During the Civil War, there was a general lack of church work. In 1866, however, a Sunday School was again organized at Edmonston's.

"Class Book for the Society at Edmonston's on the Gainesville Circuit, Harrisburg District, of the Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, for the year A. D. 1866." So reads the first page of the class record, which is still preserved.

The following names appear on the class book: J. W. Edmonston, Zerilda Edmonston, Lucinda C. Wyatt, Caroline C. Meredith, Julia A. C. Edmonston, C. A. L. Percell, Elizabeth Freeman, Cynthia Whit-

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<sup>1</sup> *Program of Dedication, Beech Grove Methodist Church, June 21, 1942, p. 4.*



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

worth, Amanda J. Wintworth, M. A. McClesky, Mary J. Webb, Elmira F. Thomas, Polly A. Stubblefield, Nancy D. Freeman, Martha A. Howard, Vincy A. Arnold, Matilda Edmonston, Malinda Edmonston, Melisa P. Whitworth, Penina J. Whitworth, Artemisa C. Edmonston, Emily P. Runnels, Luvana I. Boggs.

From this humble beginning, the organization moved in 1872 into a school, and in 1873 into a building of its own. Today a commodious frame building in a beautiful grove two miles north of Marmaduke, serves the needs of the Harvey's Chapel congregation.<sup>1</sup>

### WOOD'S CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

In the winter of 1860-61, William Wood donated the land on which a log house was built. In this house Wood's Chapel Methodist Church was organized in the spring of 1861, under the leadership of a Rev. Glassgo. The house was made of hewn logs, and the seats of split logs hewn smooth on one side and pegs driven in auger holes on the round side. The charter members of the church were William Wood, Thomas Wood, Sallie Wood, James Wood and wife, Durant Wood, Mike Wood (colored), Rev. Hezekiah Highfill and wife, Sarah Highfill, Mary Highfill, Mollie Wood, Harris Powell and wife, Anna Powell, Sallie Powell, Bettie Powell, Flora Ann McDaniel, Fannie Lloyd, and Robert C. Bowlin. The present house was built in 1890, but has had extensive additions and remodeling. The church has had an unbroken line of pastors since its organization in 1861. The information for this sketch was obtained from a manuscript pre-

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<sup>1</sup> *Methodism, Marmaduke and Harvey's Chapel*, 1935, pp. 4, 5.

## CHURCHES

pared in 1936 by Sam McDaniel, who was Sunday School superintendent of Wood's Chapel Church for fifty-two years.

### FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, PARAGOULD

In February, 1883, Rev. F. E. Taylor, pastor of the Greensboro circuit, came to Paragould and preached in an unfinished store building on West Main Street. The house was cleared of shavings, lumber, and other debris, and seats were improvised of plank. The house was lighted with lanterns and oil lamps, and a small congregation met to listen to the message. This is the first sermon on record for the town of Paragould.

Rev. F. E. Taylor continued to preach as occasion permitted, usually in a small boxed building where the Bertig Apartments are now located. It was in this building that he organized the first church ever organized in Paragould, consisting of thirteen members: Dr. and Mrs. John M. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. John N. Johnston, Mr. and Mrs. David King, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Holt, Mrs. Mattie Hammonds, Miss Nannie Davis, Mrs. P. N. Moss, and Dr. and Mrs. F. M. Scott.

On August 18, 1883, W. S. Pruett deeded to the Methodist Church Lot 2 in Block 6, with J. A. Dickson, John M. Davis, and John N. Johnston as trustees. This lot is the west half of the property now occupied by Dr. Poe's Clinic, corner of Emerson and Second streets. On this lot the Methodist Church erected a small frame building that summer and fall—the first church erected in Paragould. In 1886 a three-room boxed parsonage was built at the corner of Main

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

and Third streets, being a part of the house now occupied by W. J. Beard.

In 1894 the Methodist Church started a large brick building on the northeast corner of Emerson and Third streets. This structure was completed during the following year and occupied until 1926.

In 1913, Rev. A. C. Cloyes was named as first pastor for the East Side Methodist Church.



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, PARAGOULD

Mrs. Sarah Wyse Cook donated the lots at the corner of Main and Fourth streets for the present church location, and on September 19, 1924, the first shovel of dirt was moved by Dr. and Mrs. F. M. Scott, surviving charter members. The building committee was composed of R. W. Meriwether, C. A. Mack, H. S. Trice, L. U. Stedman, and Louis Linke. The \$125,000

## CHURCHES

structure was completed in time for the annual Conference to meet in it November 23, 1926.<sup>1</sup>

### ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, PARAGOULD

St. Mary's Congregation, Paragould, was organized by Monsignor John Eugene Weibel, in October, 1883. Since there was no church building in Paragould at that time, the first Mass was celebrated in the Commercial Hotel, which was owned by John Staudt. Soon after its foundation, the small parish began to grow. The Kasper, Springle, and Meistrel families moved to Paragould, and were added to the parish.

Rev. George Gleisner came to Northeast Arkansas and conducted services in Jonesboro, Pocahontas, and Paragould from 1887 to 1889. Father Weibel resumed the pastorate of St. Mary's Church in 1889, bought the location on Second and Highland streets for \$300, and erected a frame church for \$680.

One year later, 1890, the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters came to Paragould, bought a lot close to the Church, and built a small school and convent. At that time, only seventy-three Catholics lived in Paragould, including the Brinkman, Wrape, English, Staudt, Meistrel, Bleier, Weber, Isler, and Kirchoff families.

The small school served the parish until 1906, when the present school was built at a cost of \$10,000. The frame church served until December 13, 1936, when the present \$50,000 church building was dedicated.

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<sup>1</sup> *Paragould Daily Press*, November 17, 1926.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

The church has had only six pastors: Monsignor John E. Weibel, 1883-1887 and 1889-1891; Rev. George Gleisner, 1887-1889; Monsignor Joseph McQuaid, 1891-1899; Rev. B. H. Fuerst, 1899-1913; Rev. Robert Jenne, 1913-1915; Rev. Joseph M. Hoflinger, from January, 1915, to the present time. Since 1942, an assistant has been on the field to aid the pastor. At the present time, there are four Sisters in charge of St. Mary's School, and approximately one hundred children in attendance.

The information for this sketch was furnished by Monsignor Hoflinger, pastor for the past thirty-one years.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, PARAGOULD

On February 4, 1885, a Baptist church named Beulah (later the First Baptist Church of Paragould) was organized in the Methodist church building, with five members: J. C. Burnett, E. P. Holt, J. K. Pate, M. E. Tansil, and Josie Burnett. There was some question about the parliamentary procedure of this original organization, so on May 25, 1885, letters were returned to members and the church was reorganized. This time six members were listed as a presbytery for the organization: J. K. Pate, J. C. Bowden, M. E. Tansil, Ethel Tansil, J. C. Burnett, and Josephene Burnett. Four additional members (D. C. Norvell, W. S. Barker, Sallie Barker, and Mary L. Wiley) were received, and J. K. Pate was elected pastor.

In 1886 a one-room frame church was erected about where the present pastor's home is located. Services were held once per month until the beginning of

## CHURCHES



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, PARAGOULD

the year 1889, when meeting dates were set as the second and fourth Sundays. Salary for the pastor for the year 1887 was set at \$125, and the State Mission Board was asked to help in paying this amount. Baptismal services were conducted at Sollis Pond, in north-east Paragould.

Minutes of the Church first mention the Ladies Aid Society in 1890; Sunday School in 1894; Training Union in 1903.

In 1900, the Church purchased and remodeled the old "Opera House," corner of Court and Second streets. The one-room church was removed farther north on Third Street for a mission, and another mission was established in the south part of town. On May 26, 1912, forty-three members requested their letters, in order to organize the East Side Baptist Church. When the Opera House had been outgrown, the Church constructed the present structure, which was completed in 1924. The First Baptist Church now

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

has a membership of more than fifteen hundred persons, has two active mission branches, and has a budget income exceeding \$20,000 per year.

There have been eighteen pastors: J. K. Pate, J. W. Bell, A. S. Hall, J. S. Edmonds, J. B. Wise, J. H. Peay, J. N. Hartley, A. B. Bohannon, H. C. Rosamond, T. T. Thompson, W. C. McPherson, W. C. Wood, C. A. Dickey, B. L. Bridges, R. L. Hurst, E. A. Williamson, H. B. Reynolds, and I. M. Prince.<sup>1</sup>

### CHRISTIAN CHURCH, PARAGOULD

The Christian Church of Paragould was organized under the name of The Church of Christ, September 6, 1885, in the office of L. C. Thompson in the old Famous building which stood near the railroad back of Joseph's Store. Among the charter members were R. H. Gardner, W. R. Smith, H. H. Yates, Isabella Smith, M. J. Turner, J. W. Harris, Millie Harris, L. C. Thompson, and Mary Yates.

In 1886 a house of worship was erected on the southeast corner of Court and Third streets. This was a small brick building, said to be one of the first brick houses in Paragould. Will Sollis, Aaron Knight, Monroe Landrum, J. V. Landrum, and Jack Dunnegan helped in building the first church. This house was used continuously until June, 1907, when it was torn down to make way for the present building.

The new \$15,000 edifice with seating capacity of one thousand was dedicated July 12, 1908. L. C. Thompson, J. T. Hester, I. C. Leggitt, and J. A.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the First Baptist Church of Paragould.

## CHURCHES

Morgan were credited with being the leaders in the erection of this building.<sup>1</sup>

A strong part of the work of the Christian Church has been the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which was organized March 31, 1895, with Mrs. Maggie Knox as first president.<sup>2</sup>

According to notes left by Mrs. Mary Yantis, an early member of the Church, there have been twenty-three pastors of the Christian Church of Paragould.

### LUTHERAN CHURCH, LAFE

The first Lutheran service at Upper Lafe was conducted by Rev. A. Frederking, November 14, 1886. The church was organized under the name of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, January 9, 1887. The congregation built its first church in 1892.

Regular services at Newberry (now Lafe) began in 1889. In 1891 the first Lutheran church at Lafe was built and given the name St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The present church building was constructed in 1911. In 1918, St. Peter's Church of Upper Lafe united with St. John's Church of Lafe.

During the fiftieth anniversary celebration June 13, 1937, the following summary was given for the fifty-year period: Baptisms, 237; marriages, 66; confirmations, 252; burials, 71.

In 1937, the baptized members of the congregation came from the following families: Barner, Bate-man, Bill, Bodenstein, Brasher, Burk, Castens, Drittler,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Daily Soliphone*, July 13, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of the W. C. T. U.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Essig, Fischer, Fricke, Frock, Gerdes, Grigat, Groppe, Haertling, Hoelscher, Lange, Lauchstaedt, Lloyd, Lueker, Mueller, Nething, Panhorst, Rust, Sheer, Steyer, Thomas, Toelkin, Tritch, Ueller, Wahl, Wegner, Wiech.

The pastors of the Lutheran churches of Lafe and Upper Lafe, with date of arrival, are: Rev. A. Frederking, 1886; Rev. Bangerter, 1888; Rev. F. Steyer, 1894; Rev. Daumler, 1918; Rev. E. F. A. Riess, 1921; Rev. O. Hemman, 1922; Rev. H. E. Dueker, 1925; Rev. R. G. Lange, 1927; Rev. E. M. Frentzel, 1930; Rev. Werner Wiech, 1932;<sup>1</sup> Rev. Winfred Vathauer, 1941; Rev. Clinton Koch, 1945.

### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PARAGOULD

The First Presbyterian Church of Paragould was organized in 1918. Rev. Thos. H. Watkins came on July 1, 1918, at the request of the Home Mission Committee of the Arkansas Presbytery. On December 29, 1918, the formal organization of the Church took place at his home at 324 West Garland Street, known as the old Meriwether home. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. D. L. Andrews, Mrs. Arthur Haegler, Mrs. J. A. White, Mrs. Thos. H. Watkins, John B. Watkins III, Mary H. Watkins, Thos. C. Watkins, Mrs. L. A. LaFont, Dr. E. Martha Hawkins, Irma Maylee, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Cody, Mrs. Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Cross, Mrs. Jos. Snell, Mrs. J. O. McCaddon. Meetings were held at the pastor's home or at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church until 1921, when the present church building was constructed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Fiftieth Anniversary Program, June 13, 1937, St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Lafe, Arkansas.*

## CHURCHES

The Woman's Auxiliary was organized January 31, 1919; the Sunday School, September 14, 1919; Christian Endeavor, October 20, 1920. The pastor's home, adjacent to the church, was built in 1925. There have been four pastors: Thomas H. Watkins, 1918-1922; Wm. D. Denham, 1922-1924; Jas. W. McNutt, 1925-1935; C. T. McCulley, 1935 to the present time.<sup>1</sup>

### BAPTIST CHURCH, LAFE

The building now used by the Baptist Church of Lafe was built in 1892 as the Evangelical Friendship Church. Nearly all of the building material was donated by Mr. W. M. Bierbaum, who owned a sawmill. The Evangelical congregation disbanded in 1918, but kept up the Sunday School for a few years.

Rev. E. Z. Newsom, Baptist, and Rev. E. C. Castleberry, Methodist, took turns in coming to Lafe to preach to a non-denominational group. In 1920, this group started a union Sunday School, which they continued until they were invited into the Evangelical building. Since the group was largely of Baptist faith, a Baptist Sunday School was organized. In April, 1922, the Baptist Church was organized, following a revival held by Rev. E. Z. Newsom, assisted by Rev. Oscar Harvey. The first pastor was Rev. R. C. Rogers. Others who have served as pastor are Rev. J. D. J. Faulkner, Rev. Bill Sutterfield, Rev. J. C. Pillows, Rev. J. O. Miles, Rev. J. H. Mathews, Rev. A. O. Collier, and at the present time, Rev. Robert Spain.

This information was furnished by Mr. T. C. Barner, charter member of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the First Presbyterian Church of Paragould.

## CHAPTER VII

### SCHOOLS

#### EARLY SCHOOLS

AS WAS COMMON throughout Arkansas in early days, the pioneer schools of Greene County were "few and far between," and of the most inferior nature. A few of the pioneer settlers employed such teachers as could be obtained for what might be considered ordinary laborers' wages, and thus afforded some meager facilities for the education of their children. Though the State had a school system, there were practically no free schools prior to the inauguration of the present school system, which has taken place since the Civil War. Owing to the inadequate facilities for education, many of the citizens of the county reached their manhood without ever attending school.<sup>1</sup>

#### PRIOR TO 1850

The best available description of the schools of Greene County prior to 1850 is found in B. H. Crowley's autobiography, which appeared in the *Soliphone*, November 26, 1906.

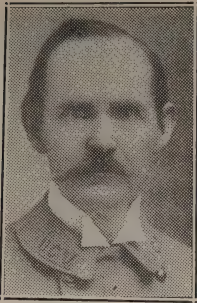
The system of education in the early days of the country, if indeed it could be called a system, and the mode of making up a school, were entirely different from that of today. Each school stood separate and alone from all other schools, there being no organized system, and no free tuition as now. The teacher proposing to

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 120.

## SCHOOLS

conduct a school at a given place went around among the patrons and secured subscribers, and



B. H. CROWLEY

if a sufficient number could be obtained at a certain price, and the teacher boarded 'round among the scholars, it was given out that so-and-so would teach the school, beginning on a certain day. The writer recalls one of these itinerant pedagogues coming to his stepfather's house to secure scholars after having been around over the neighborhood making up a school. When questioned about his school and what he proposed to teach, he replied, "Well, the spelling book, reading, writing and arithmetic." There was no other spelling book then than the Webster's Blueback, and it is doubtful if there has ever been much improvement in the text book. I shall never forget with what wonder and amazement we regarded the new teacher when he declared that he could teach as far as the Single Rule of Three in Pike's Arithmetic, and we never ceased to regard him as a perfect mathematical wonder.

The first school the writer ever went to, and among the first schools taught in the county, was conducted by Robert H. Hailey, in a log house on Eight Mile Creek, about a mile and a half from where Paragould now is, but which was then almost a wilderness. The house was constructed of round poles and covered with rough boards. A large space was cut out of one side for a door and this never had any shutter, one end was left open for the fireplace, there was no floor except the dirt, and split logs served for seats.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

The second school the writer attended was at Gainesville, and was taught by old Parson Henry Powell. This school house was said to be the finest in the county, it being at the county site, but it was also constructed of logs, unhewed, and with a door in one side, closed at night by a shutter made of clapboards. This house had a floor made of split logs with one side hewn and placed down on pole sleepers. There was also one window left in the side of the house to admit light and air, but it was without glass, shutters or blinds, and stood open day and night, winter and summer. The seats were manufactured on the spot and consisted of split logs, hewn on the flat side, and pegs placed at each end for legs. There was no back to these benches, and as the legs were only at the ends, the bench often sagged almost to the puncheon floor in the middle when full of great strapping boys and girls.

The school children of sixty years ago in Greene County had but few studies, seldom more than four, but they were required to get long lessons, and get them well. They sat on backless benches and looked steadily at the same lesson for hours at a time, and woe to the urchin who faced his teacher with a task unprepared. The rod was not spared in those days, and consequently few children spoiled in the schooling. The teacher's chief business was whipping the scholars, and every offense was punished alike.

### FOLLOWING THE CIVIL WAR

Miss Frances Shiras, in her history of Baxter County, described the early schools of Arkansas in the period following the Civil War. She stated that the school houses were often abandoned dwellings, or any

## SCHOOLS

other available structure, with a puncheon floor, clapboard door, few windows, and furnished with split log benches so high that the larger pupils had to help the smaller ones up. Blackboards were practically unknown. Most of the terms were held during the summer, as there were often no facilities for heating the buildings. The textbook in general use was Webster's Blue Back Speller, and it was a complete education in itself for the first few years. Many of the pupils had no books at all and teaching was difficult. The pupils came when there was no work to be done at home, and were rarely ever classified. Each was in a class by himself, and recited in the order of his arrival at school—the first to get to school recited first, and so on in regular order. School had no scheduled time to start; it commenced when someone came to recite. The teacher usually kept a big switch in a crack in the wall which he called to the attention of disturbing pupils. The teacher was called the schoolmaster, and it was the ambition of everyone in the community to "stump" him on a problem. In many instances, he boarded among the patrons, first with one and then with another, taking out part of his salary in board.<sup>1</sup>

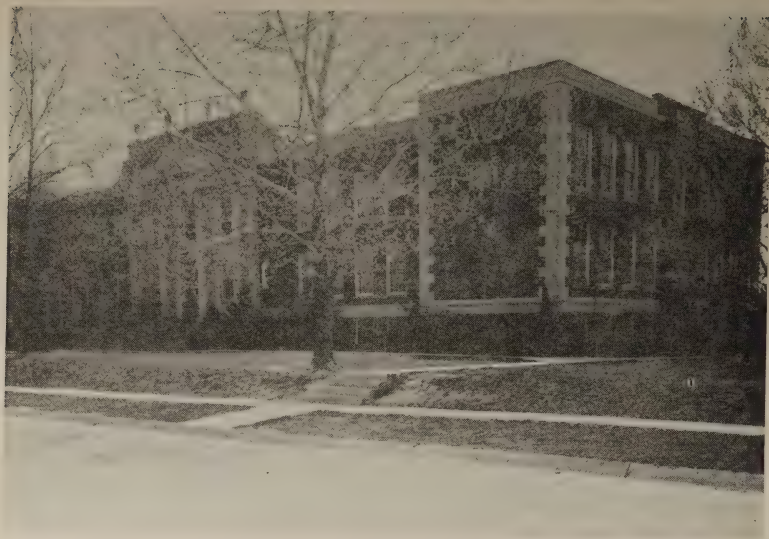
### IN 1889

Schools progressed steadily but slowly. In 1882 there were thirty-nine districts in Greene County. By 1888, the number of districts had increased to fifty-nine. Goodspeed's history of 1889 stated that "the wages paid are sufficient to secure teachers of good ability," and then proceeded to state that the average

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<sup>1</sup> Shiras, *History of Baxter County*, pp. 90, 91.

*HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*



PARAGOULD HIGH SCHOOL



ELMWOOD SCHOOL

## SCHOOLS

monthly salaries paid to teachers of Greene County were: "teachers of the first grade, males, \$42.50, females \$37.50; second grade, males \$40, females \$35; third grade, males \$32.50, females \$30." At that time, the school enumeration showed 4,401 possibilities, of which 2,219 were enrolled in school. Other statistics for the year were: "Frame and log schoolhouses reported, 28, valued at \$4,338.75; revenue raised for the support of common schools, \$18,957.09."<sup>1</sup>

### IN 1906

According to an issue of the *Soliphone* for November 26, 1906, the school system seems to have advanced appreciably by that time.

There are now nearly one hundred good school houses in the county, all well supplied with furniture, apparatus, trained teachers, and good open roads for reaching the same. An institute is held annually for the instruction and better training of the common school teachers of the county. The writer is indebted to the present county examiner for the following facts concerning the public schools of Greene County:

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Number of free school districts in the county .....   | 83    |
| Special districts .....                               | 2     |
| Number of children of school age in the county .....  | 8,088 |
| Number enrolled in the public schools .....           | 5,091 |
| Number enrolled in private schools .....              | 182   |
| Average daily attendance of all at school .....       | 2,918 |
| Number of teachers employed in the free schools ..... | 109   |

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<sup>1</sup> Goodspeed, *Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, p. 121.



*HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*



WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL



L. W. BALDWIN SCHOOL

## SCHOOLS

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Number of teachers holding different grades<br>of license: Life, 1; Professional, 5; 1st<br>grade, 51; 2nd grade, 41; 3rd grade, 17. |             |
| Valuation of school houses .....   | \$41,010.00 |
| Amount of money available for free<br>school purposes during the year....  | \$53,488.47 |

### IN 1945

E. W. Little, County School Supervisor, furnished the following statistics for the school year ending June 30, 1945:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Total enumeration .....                | 7,286     |
| Total enrollment .....                 | 6,652     |
| Average daily attendance .....         | 5,284     |
| Number of school superintendents ..... | 10        |
| Number of classroom teachers .....     | 189       |
| Total value of school property .....   | \$687,800 |
| Total revenue receipts .....           | \$340,579 |

School superintendents averaged \$2,403 annual salary, while class room teachers received an average of \$950.66 for the year.

There were thirteen high schools: Shady Grove, Greene County, Walcott, Beech Grove, Alexander, Delaplaine, Lafe, Oak Grove, Lakeside, Stanford, Light, Marmaduke, and Paragould.

There were forty-four elementary schools: Scatter Creek, New Home, Cooper, Providence, Halliday, Newberry, Bobo, Connelly, Tower, Haney, Purcell, Ramer, Pine Knot, Mounds, Cross Roads, Post Oak, White Oak, North End, Evening Shade, Oak Ridge, Stonewall, Pruett, Gramling, Pleasant Hill, Mooring, Shady Grove, Greene County, Walcott, Beech Grove,

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Alexander, Delaplaine, Peach Orchard, Lafe, Oak Grove, Cotton Belt, Lakeside, Stanford, Corner, Light, Marmaduke, Tokio, L. W. Baldwin, Woodrow Wilson, and Elmwood.

In addition, there were two parochial schools (Lutheran at Lafe, and Catholic at Paragould), employing four teachers, and having an enrollment of eighty-five pupils.



GREENE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL,  
TYPICAL OF THE ELEVEN CONSOLIDATED  
SCHOOLS OF THE COUNTY

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Progress is being made toward the establishment of a central technical school in Greene County that will teach a great variety of subjects to students in the eleventh and twelfth grades.

The plan is to continue the good work being done by the consolidated schools, up to the eleventh grade. School buses will bring all children to the present schools daily. The bus for the technical school will then collect the students of the eleventh and twelfth grades of the various districts and transport them to the technical school.



## SCHOOLS

The object of this plan is to offer more subjects of a vocational nature, so that the youngsters who do not go to college will be prepared to take their place in industrial and commercial life.

Some of the courses that will be taught in the proposed technical school are: Vocational Guidance, Agriculture, Home Economics, Beauty Culture, Farm Machinery Repair, Food Preservation, Forestry, Auto Mechanics, Pre-Flight Training, Woodworking, Radio, Electricity, Sheet Metal Work, Welding, Repair and Servicing of Household Equipment, Manufacture of Dairy Products, Possibilities of Frozen and Dehydrated Foods, Complete Commercial Course, Health and Physical Education, Mathematics, General Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Reserve Officers Training Corps, English, Social Sciences, Piano, Public Speaking, Art, and Foreign Languages.

## TEACHERS' INSTITUTE

An annual institute for teachers, required by law to be held by the county examiner, did much in keeping teachers informed on educational practices.

A newspaper clipping has been located which described the Peabody Normal Institute of 1907, during the two weeks beginning on June 10. The sessions were held in the West Side public school building, and were a continuation of a three-months term conducted by the county examiner.

The Institute of 1907 was in charge of Prof. W. W. Rivers, President of Hendrix Female College, at Conway. The State Department of Public Instruc-



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

tion prepared an outline of work for the first week, and a program committee appointed by the instructor assigned persons from among those in attendance to present the work for each period of the several days. Teachers from the entire county were required to attend, except on special excuse of serious illness. Homes in Paragould were opened for the entertainment of out-of-town teachers.

There were one hundred, twenty-six teachers present for the 1907 Instiute. Some of the names are so familiar that a few are being listed here: C. E. Bond, W. A. Branch, Porter Cathey, Maude Howell, Lillian Howell, Bertha Howell, Oscar Harvey, Cecil Kennedy, W. K. Kelley, Martha Lytle, Della Mack, Wint Mack, Woodie McBride, C. D. Morrice, Orine Porter, Geo. H. Rogers, C. E. Richardson, W. L. Skaggs, Pearl Stevenson, P. A. Thomas, Dot Thompson, Tennie Williamson, and Alfred Walden.

### PARAGOULD SCHOOL HISTORY

For several years, Paragould had the unusual condition of two separate school districts, each governed by a school board of three directors. It was not until 1900 that an agreement was made to unite the two districts to form a special school district. Six directors were elected, and F. M. Malone was elected superintendent for the year 1900-1901. The eighth and ninth grades constituted the High School department.<sup>1</sup>

William L. Skaggs was superintendent for the next six years, 1901-1907. He was a firm discipli-

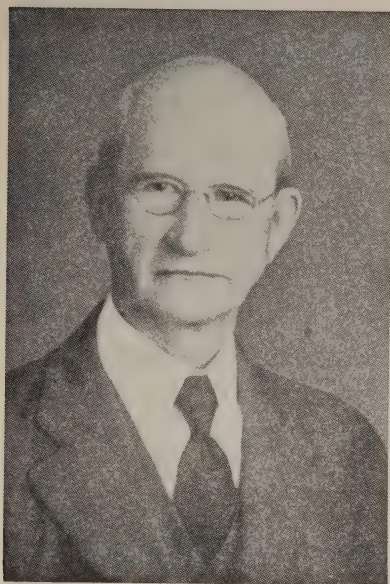
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<sup>1</sup> *The Kennel*, 1929, p. 6.

## SCHOOLS

narian, demanding high standard of teachers and pupils. He published this table to show the progress made during his administration.

|                     | Supt. Malone |      | Supt. William L. Skaggs |      |      |      |      |
|---------------------|--------------|------|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Year Ending         | 1901         | 1902 | 1903                    | 1904 | 1905 | 1906 | 1907 |
| Annual Enrollment   | 689          | 679  | 724                     | 769  | 755  | 751  | 754  |
| Average Attendance  | 358          | 361  | 410                     | 474  | 515  | 522  | 548  |
| Pupils Tardy        | 4935         | 2749 | 2191                    | 1406 | 221  | 99   | 43   |
| Corporal Punishment | 205          | 205  | 196                     | 185  | 101  | 46   | 24   |
| Teachers Tardy      | 71           | 48   | 25                      | 16   | 9    | 7    | 6    |



W. L. SKAGGS

Pupils were counted tardy if they were more than a minute late. The morning session began at 8:30 and the afternoon session at 1 o'clock. Teachers were counted tardy if they reached their rooms later than 8:15 in the morning. They were required to stay on the school premises until 4:15 in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup>

For the school year 1906-1907, the faculty of the West Side School consisted of William J. Bradley (Principal), Miss Gertrude Millar, Miss Allie Stedman, Miss Maude Howell, Miss Orine Porter, and Miss Della Mack. Teachers of the East Side School were Charles D.

<sup>1</sup> Report of Paragould Public Schools for 1906-07, p. 11.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Morrice (Principal), Miss Jessie White, Miss Mattie Lytle, and Miss Grace Hagler.<sup>1</sup>

The first graduating class (1903) consisted of four young ladies, who completed the first three years of High School work. During the years between 1901 and 1907, the eleventh and twelfth grades were established. High school enrollment for 1906-1907 was as follows; Ninth grade, 24; tenth grade, 18; eleventh grade, 14; and twelfth grade, 8.<sup>2</sup>

H. R. Partlow was superintendent for five years, 1907-1912. During his term Music, Drawing, and Manual Training were introduced. A high school building was erected at Main and Ninth streets.

L. B. Ray was superintendent for the years 1912-1916. The outstanding events of this administration were the completion of the East and South Side buildings.

James W. Ramsey served as superintendent for five years, 1916-1921. These years were particularly important from an athletic point of view. Quite a number of superior athletes were produced, and the football team won state-wide laurels.<sup>3</sup> The Commercial Department was established in 1918, with Mrs. R. P. Taylor as instructor. The West Side School was destroyed by fire, and temporary shed buildings were erected.

T. C. Abbott next held the office, 1921-1927. In 1926 the present High School building was completed. The former High School building became the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of Paragould Public Schools for 1906-07*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *The Kennel*, 1929, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.



## SCHOOLS



CHAMPION FOOTBALL TEAM, 1920

Standing, left to right: Coach Ben I. Mayo, Milton Mack, Bill Meriwether, Ray Hester, Harry Echols, Dewey McNelly, John Purcell, Jack Boone, Franklin Wilbourn. Bottom row: Byron Futrell, Pan Freeman, Harold Rogers, Lee Derry, Everett Rogers, Wright Salters, Floyd Johnson, Donald Cox.

West Side school, and assumed the name Woodrow Wilson School. The East Side school was called the Elmwood School, and the South Side school became known as the L. W. Baldwin School. During this administration, the Junior High School, grades seven through nine, was thoroughly organized, and housed in the new High School building.<sup>1</sup>

J. Will Pierce was superintendent during the years 1927-1934. Although these years were hampered by financial depression, the schools upheld their standards and increased in enrollment.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Kennel*, 1929, p. 7.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Clifford S. Blackburn, 1934-1937, began a program of student activities, and made progress with the High School Band and the Agriculture Department.

Rufus D. Haynes, 1937-1945, introduced the Diversified Occupations program, improved the Physical Education and Home Economics departments, and reduced the indebtedness by refinancing bonds.

Ralph Haizlip, superintendent since July 1, 1945, has been active in supervising a program of instruction for returning veterans of World War II.

### FIRST GRADUATES OF PARAGOULD HIGH SCHOOL

*Class of 1903:* Flossie Graves, Olive Kirby, Lena Terrell, Lela Weatherly.

*Class of 1904:* Maude Brown, Medora Hampton, Marie Hodges, Maude Howell, Nina McKinney, Veona Weatherly, Jessie White.

*Class of 1905:* Pearl Justice, Homer Linebarger, Orine Porter, Will McLeod, Campbell Reiney, Roy Vickers, Susie White, Mattie Whatsitt, Vivian Williams.

*Class of 1906:* Lelia Apperson, Lelia Elliot, Edith Hill, Kate Johnson, Howard McDonald, Maggie McKenzie, Alberta Mueller, Stella O'Brien, Willa Smith, Gertrude Snyder, Guy Spillman, Maude Thompson, Phoebe Van Tassel.

*Class of 1907:* Edna Evans, Eldon Hendricks, Agnes Reiney, Wanda Richards, Almar Stamps, Alvin Stamps, Lucille Tarrant, Carrie White.

*SCHOOLS*



MEDORA HAMPTON'S GRADUATION PICTURE  
(MRS. B. M. KITCHENS)  
CLASS OF 1904

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

*Class of 1908:* Ernest Dennis, Lillian Howell, Lucille Kitchens, Lilbourn Meriwether, Olive Mitchell, Russell Schuh, Joe Spani, Claude Stotts, Edna Turner, Mattie White, Irvin Wolf.

*Class of 1909:* Helen Anderson, Alfred Burr, Marguerite Morgan, Bonnie Riggsbee, Ruth Simpson, Linnie Stamps.

*Class of 1910:* John Batten, Verna Bledsoe, Virginia Bledsoe, Laura Burr, Grace Freeman, Hays Porter.

*Class of 1911:* Zelma Blackwood, Mildred Dennis, Maude Heaton, Tom Kitchens, Frances Morgan, Byron Richardson, Euvila Schuh, Zelma Thompson.

### THOMPSON'S CLASSICAL INSTITUTE

A strong factor in the educational development of some of the best citizens of Greene County was the Thompson Classical Institute.

In 1883, Professor R. S. Thompson established the Thompson Classical Institute at Alamo, Tennessee. The school prospered, but he decided to change the location. In 1891, the school was established in Paragould.

Professor Thompson was a graduate of Washington and Lee University, and a student of law. His superior education and firm discipline appealed to the people of Greene County. His partner was Professor George R. Hopkins, a pioneer teacher of the county, who became a good business manager for the school.

The Thompson Classical Institute was conducted in a large building on the southeast corner of Court



## SCHOOLS

and Third streets—the building now occupied by the Frozen Food Lockers. The entire upstairs was used for classrooms, and, for a while, the downstairs was used for elementary classes. At intermission the students felt the need of space for a playground, sometimes resorting to the streets or the Court House lawn. Since there were no high schools in the vicinity at that time, students came from a distance, boarding in private homes during the week and returning to their families for the week-end.



THOMPSON'S CLASSICAL INSTITUTE  
ENTIRE STUDENT BODY, 1898-1899

Standing, extreme left, is Professor Thompson.  
Next to him is Professor Hopkins.

The best testimony available about Thompson's Classical Institute is the annual catalogue of the school for the year ending May, 1899, a twenty-eight page booklet resembling a college catalogue. The faculty included R. S. Thompson, Geo. R. Hopkins, Miss Cora A. Duke, Mrs. Mattie E. Huddleston, Miss



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Claudia Marsh, and Miss N. Elizabeth Beard. Eight citizens were listed as a Board of Visitors. The course of study was planned for four years, equivalent to a high school course, with emphasis on foreign languages. The Institute took pride in the fact that its library was composed of over five hundred volumes.

The year was divided into three terms with expenses as follows:

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Tuition fee for each term in regular course | \$14.00          |
| In preparatory department, for each term    | \$10.00          |
| German or Pedagogy, per term                | \$ 5.00          |
| Instrumental music, per term                | \$12.00          |
| Elocution, private lessons, per month       | \$ 4.00          |
| Elocution, in class, per month              | \$ 1.00          |
| Board, per week, with private families      | \$2.00 to \$2.50 |

The Philomathian Literary Society was organized at the beginning of the session of 1891-92, "for the improvement of its members in oratory and debate, general literature and research, and the investigation of questions literary, historic, scientific, philosophic, and economic."

The roster of pupils for 1898-99 includes sixty-five boys and thirty-eight girls, a few of whom are familiar as citizens of recent times: W. C. Barnhill, M. F. Dover, O. O. Fisher, J. C. Honey, Thomas Johnson, B. M. Kitchens, J. G. Meiser, Wallace Meiser, G. H. Rogers, R. C. Rogers, Lenzie Stephenson, W. A. Stephenson, R. P. Taylor, B. F. Walker, Grace McKinney (Mrs. Walter Ellis), Nina McKinney (Mrs. Harry Jones), Ola Trice (Mrs. Guy Adams), and Mary Yantis (Mrs. John Meiser).

Professor Thompson's health failed in 1903, and he closed the school. He taught a few private pupils

## SCHOOLS

in his home on North Sixth Street for a short time thereafter.

### PARRISH BUSINESS COLLEGE

B. H. Parrish has been training young people for the business world for more than half a century. His methods are thorough, his demands exacting, his penmanship beautiful, and his mind open for suggestions of up-to-date developments.

In 1899, he was established in the Parrish Business College to the extent that he advertised in the Thompson Classical Institute catalogue the following courses:

Business Course—Bookkeeping, Banking, Office Routine, Arithmetic, Commercial Law, Letterwriting, Spelling, Business Forms, etc.

Short Course—Shorthand, Typewriting, Letterwriting, Spelling, Penmanship, Business Customs, Invoicing, Letter Copying, Manifolded, and General Office Work.

Mathematics and English—Reading, Writing, Spelling, Letterwriting, Business Forms, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, English Grammar and Rhetoric.

Penmanship—Plain Penmanship, Ornamental, Flourishing, Pen Lettering, Engrossing and Automatic Penmanship.

Telegraphing and Railroading—The work in this department will include instruction in all that is required of a first-class operator.

*The Soliphone*, for September 18, 1903, told of the progress of the school.

One of the leading factors in the educational progress of Paragould is the Parrish College,

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

owned and presided over by Prof. B. H. Parrish. This school opened for business in Paragould just four years and four months ago. In the four years, he has turned out about 75 graduates, most of whom are holding good positions, some of them lucrative ones. Such young men as Robert Carpenter, manager of the Paragould Medicine Co., Joe Yates, assistant auditor of the Paragould Southeastern Ry. Co., Roger Williams, stenographer for Johnson & Huddleston, Pierce Taylor, private secretary to Congressman Macon, and numerous others, have taken courses in this school and have acquired there the accomplishments that make them valuable in their respective positions.

For something like twenty years, Professor Parrish struggled against adverse conditions in Paragould, first in connection with Thompson Classical Institute, southeast corner of Court and Third streets, and later upstairs in the McHaney building, due east of the Post Office. Mr. Parrish then moved to Jonesboro, and continues there as head of the Parrish Business College.

### CROFT BIBLE COLLEGE

Dr. George B. Croft, a physician in Sugar Creek Township, willed his two-story residence and a valuable farm to the Christian church for the establishment of a school for young people of that denomination. Although without equipment, library, or laboratory, and with meager furnishings, the school made a brave start. Its influence was felt for several years after its establishment.

An article in the *Soliphone* of January 4, 1907, described the founding of the school.

Dr. George B. Croft was one of the early settlers of the county, and was probably the first

## SCHOOLS

physician to locate in what is now Greene County. He was the first representative the county sent to the territorial legislature. He lived to a great age, and left his estate to the Christian church, of which he was a member, and left a will that it should be used to establish and maintain a college for the education of the youth of that denomination, the condition being that the school be founded on his homestead, and in accordance with his direction. The Croft Bible College has been erected on the place, which is in section 22, township 17 north, range 4 east, and the institution is in every way worthy of the church and of the man who founded it. . . . Dr. Croft and his estimable wife had no direct descendants, and after the war closed, the doctor gave to each of his oldest and most faithful negroes forty acres of land and a mule, performing literally the promises of the abolitionists to the Southern slave.

### MARIE JUSTICE ACADEMY

An institution of modest pretensions but of substantial merit to the community was the school conducted by Mrs. Marie Justice in her home at 627 West Highland Street. The school was at first intended as a kindergarten only, but other departments were added from time to time. Finally the institution took on the title of academy, claiming that "the art of punctuation, the rules for capitalization, the advantage of paragraphing, the beauty of indenting, and the necessity for correct spelling, are subjects of daily and patient drilling." When she died in 1926, Mrs. Justice left a will stating that her extensive library, a farm, and a substantial bank account, were to be donated to Paragould High School for the endowment of the Marie Justice Memorial Library.



## CHAPTER VIII

### NEWSPAPERS

#### GREENE COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

REV. J. D. C. COBB first landed in Gainesville with a printing outfit in 1874 and established the *Gainesville Times*, which he conducted for two years, then moved his plant to Jonesboro in April, 1876. Part of the old town of Gainesville was destroyed by fire that year, and Jonesboro offered him inducements to locate there, since it had no newspaper. At the time Rev. Cobb established his paper, the *Osceola Times* and a paper published at Pocahontas were the only other papers published in this section of Arkansas.<sup>1</sup>

Frank M. Daulton soon established the *Greene County Events*, which he published at Gainesville for a number of years. Attorney A. P. Mack purchased the paper from Mr. Daulton, purely as a business venture and as a political organ. No fortune was realized from the venture, but as a political power it aided Judge L. L. Mack in some of his campaigns for public positions.

Editor Mack sold the paper to Rev. David B. Warren, who was in charge when it was moved to Paragould in 1884, when all of the business and most of the people came to the new county seat. The following comment was later made about Rev. Warren's policy: "Bro. Warren was about that time clerk of the county, and he evidently used the *Press* as a political

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, *History of Craighead County*, p. 354.

## NEWSPAPERS

booster for himself, as he put everybody on the list and never dunned a man for a subscription. This he could afford, because he had the best public office in the county and could thus turn all the official printing to his newspaper and at the same time curry favor with the voters by sending them the paper free. It might have been a good thing for Bro. Warren, but it was hard on his successors.”<sup>1</sup>

*The Greene County Press* was the next venture in the newspaper field, being edited in rapid succession by W. P. Adams, J. R. Taylor, and W. A. H. McDaniel. J. R. Taylor then founded the *Greene County Record*, which he consolidated in 1886 with the *Greene County Press* under the new name of the *Soliphone*. In 1893 he also purchased the *Greene County Events*, which was merged with the *Soliphone* to become the *Soliphone Events*. In 1912, Mr. Taylor divided the paper into the *Daily Press* for Paragould residents, and the *Soliphone* for rural subscribers, but placed them under a single management in 1916.

After a long tenure in the newspaper business, Mr. Taylor sold the papers to Griffin Smith, and leased the job printing department to A. M. Owen. Desiring to enter law school, Griffin Smith disposed of his newspaper interests to Rupert C. Wright, who had been connected with the papers for some time as advertising manager. The papers have been published under his able leadership from 1920 to the present time.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Soliphone*, December 24, 1909.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

### "Stump Town News"

The first newspaper ever issued in Paragould was written with pen and ink, and bore the undignified caption "Stump Town News." An undated clipping from the *Soliphone* described the first news sheets.

Mrs. Bonner Davis has left at the *Soliphone* office some old manuscript found among the papers of the late Dr. John M. Davis, her father-in-law. The manuscript is copies of the "Stump Town News," the first newspaper ever issued in Paragould, and is about 25 years old. Gentry Newson was the editor, and there were several contributors, among them being Miss Nannie Davis, eldest daughter of Dr. Davis, long since deceased, and who was the wife of P. W. Moss and the mother of Miss Aurie Moss. Paragould was in the woods then and was a village with few good buildings of any kind, but the people who composed the colony were a sociable set and greatly enjoyed social gatherings, which were not conducted with much pomp and splendor, but in which a large degree of hospitality made them all the more pleasurable. Among the items found in the "Stump Town News," which was written with pen and ink, we quote as follows:

"A drummer was heard to say the other day, while walking away from one of our city hotels, that the rooms were most too small for bedrooms and a little too large for a coffin."

"We had the pleasure of attending the social given by the Methodist Aid Society on Friday afternoon at the home of Mr. John N. Johnston. Never did we see young ladies look prettier, and we must not forget to compliment the young gentlemen. They looked splendid. Among those present were Misses Norvell, Ware, McCrea,

## NEWSPAPERS

Davis, Hale, Dickson, Dalton, Dacus, Gardner, and Bennett; Messrs. Frazier, Dalton, Davis, Meriwether, Carter, Reeves, Knox and Hale."

"Miss Ethel Tansil, one of our fairest, left the 10th for her old home in Tennessee. May her joys be as deep as the ocean and her sorrows as light as the foam."

The manuscript from which the above items were taken bore at its head the name of Gentry Newsom as editor and the politics of the publication was Democratic. Another manuscript of about the same age, no date being given on either one, bears the name of Nannie Davis as editor, from which we make the following extracts:

"Mr. Willis Pruet, Capt. Meriwether and others are out on a hunt this week over in the Cache bottoms."

"Paragould Sabbath school is on the boom. Hope it will continue."

"A certain young lady made the remark that when the train pulled out of the station Sunday morning she could not help crying. We do not wonder at Miss Lee Dickson crying, as Mr. Long left on that train."

"A young lady said she had company Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday night, but the worst of all was Saturday night. She had to give Luther the hand of parting. We offer our heartfelt sympathy, Miss Dickson."

### *The News Letter*

An issue of *The News Letter*, dated October 11, 1901, has been located. Percy W. Moss, Paragould, Arkansas, was listed as publisher. This issue was Volume 2, Number 52, measured 11" x 16", and



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

contained ten pages of four columns. There was a small amount of European news, a lengthy article on Arkansas State news, several articles of happenings in other states, the County Court docket, numerous personal items, one column of jokes, and enough advertisements to equal two pages. The "County Directory" included brief advertisements from nine establishments at Walcott, five at Lorado, five at Finch, six at Marmaduke and three at Crowley. One column was devoted to the "Programme for the Grand Parade and Reunion of Veterans and Sons of Veterans, Friday, Oct. 18, 1901." One front page item headed "Possums and Coons" indicated plans for a good time.

Constable Albert Jackson is preparing to give the old Confederates a 'possum and coon stew in addition to the other good things in sight for the 18th, and he requests us to urge all the sons of veterans in reach of town who have good coon and 'possum dogs, to get a move on themselves and bring in all the ring-tails and marsupials they can capture, by noon on Thursday, the 17th. Bring them dressed and he will put them in cold storage until needed the next day. Now, somebody bring in the taters.

### *Paragould Democrat*

A portion of a copy of the *Paragould Democrat* for December 2, 1904, stated that the paper was the successor to the *News Letter*, was published by the Democrat Publishing Company, and had Chas. H. Stuart as editor and manager. A long article described the Northeast Arkansas Teachers Association at Wynne, and told of speeches made by Miss Della Mack, Mrs. M. A. Justice, and Prof. B. H. Parrish, all of Paragould.

## NEWSPAPERS

### *The Educational News*

For something like two years, 1909 and 1910, W. L. Skaggs published monthly *The Educational News*, four pages 11" x 16", with four columns to the page. The articles dealt exclusively with school news, educational aims, and psychology. The February, 1909, issue listed the teachers of the twenty-two rural schools of Greene County.

### *The Soliphone*

J. R. Taylor's amusing but lengthy account of the trials of newspaper life is repeated here from the December 24, 1909, issue of the *Soliphone*.

We have often been asked, what does the word Soliphone mean? It means the voice of light. The name was given it by W. P. Adams. He searched the records of newspaper nomenclature to find one that would suit him when he started the paper in 1890 and failing to find one decided to call it the *Soliphone*. He took the Latin word sol, the sun, and the Greek word, phonics, sound, and made the hybrid word Solphone, or Soliphone, with the small "i" as a coupling pin to hold the two words together.

The Soliphone had its birth in a little frame building on the corner lot on Emerson street where the First Methodist church stands. It was born as a Populist paper and Ross Coffman says he was the wet nurse. Ross was a Populist then as he is now, if he has any politics. W. P. Adams was the editor. He had a little Army press and about a wheelbarrow load of type and W. A. H. McDaniel, editor of the *Paragould Press* at that time had a mortgage on it. We don't suppose the

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

outfit was worth over \$200. Adams couldn't make any money out of it and McDaniel foreclosed his mortgage and cut off the breath of Ross Coffman's baby newspaper. Ross got tired of paying the doctor bills and let the thing die.

The editor of the *Soliphone* had just at that time returned to the town after an absence of two years, having formerly edited the *Paragould Press* for four years, and feeling sorry for Adams and having it in for McDaniel on general principles, we concluded to back Adams in getting another outfit, which was easy done as the outfit was to cost nothing.

M. F. Collier had dabbled in a newspaper at Pocahontas before coming to Paragould and like most business men who do such a thing had gotten his fingers burnt. He wanted somebody to take the outfit which fell to him as the result of his investment, off his hands. It was stored away in a barn at Reno, in Randolph County. We went there and looked at it. The chickens were roosting on it, and it had hayseed in its hair, but we concluded to make Collier an offer for it. The offer was as follows: Collier was to let us have the outfit at a rental price of \$50 a year for a period of four years, with an option to purchase at any time during the lease period at the price of \$450. All the money paid on the rental price was to apply on the purchase price should the option be exercised, and the rental of the first year was to be paid in the removal of the outfit to Paragould and cleaning it up, which was quite a job. To our surprise Collier accepted the offer, and the outfit was moved here and turned over to Adams with the understanding that he was to be the manager and share in the profits, but that the present editor was to be the editor and control the policy of the paper.

## NEWSPAPERS

This plan worked very well except for the fact that it did not make any money, not enough to keep Adams in spending money, and we made a shift and got another man, P. W. Moss. Moss was a good newspaper man and a fair printer, but the shop receipts were too light for both, but we managed to jog along and make it pretty lively for our competitor. He, (McDaniel) having become appraised of the terms of the deal with Collier set a trap to catch the *Soliphone* again, and once when the editor was off in Kentucky looking after matrimonial affairs, McDaniel bought Collier's option and then he began to tell it around that he had bought the *Soliphone*. We publicly gave the lie to the statement and McDaniel wanted to fight, but didn't do it.

Things rocked along some time and McDaniel made some heavy investments in printing material, on a credit of course, and equipped *The Press* in fine shape. He anticipated that we would close out the option and pay him \$450, as he knew we had friends here from whom we could get the money, but the old outfit was hardly worth that amount, and besides everything indicated that McDaniel was needing the money and was needing it mighty bad, so at the expiration of the second year of the lease we let it go and it fell back on McDaniel with a dull, and to him a sickening, thud. We went to St. Louis and bought a small outfit, worth about \$500, on a credit of course, and McDaniel carted the old outfit off to Oklahoma where he and his brother started a paper. Mc's notes to the foundry began to fall due, he couldn't meet them, and he had to let *The Press* go. He unloaded it on Ross Coffman. Ross had not yet gotten enough of the newspaper business and was easy picking. Ross went behind *The Press* with his money and his influence. He employed an editor and a busi-



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

ness manager and started the thing to rolling. Now Ross is a good farmer and a good mill man and when he gathers his crops or puts his lumber on the market there is always something in sight, but when he went to gather the crop of sheckles that were want to come in from his newspaper they weren't there. Ross repeated his experience with Adams on a larger scale and if you want to hear him cuss now just mention buying a newspaper to him.

A young fellow by the name of Thomas leased the paper from Ross and in the meantime the outfit was moved to the old Bertig building back of Joseph's, the *Soliphone* already having sought that refuge of bats and cheap rents. There were two rooms, the *Soliphone* occupied one and *The Press* the other and each paid \$10 a month rent. In the meantime the cylinder press which *The Press* had been using got out of commission and Thomas used the *Soliphone* press. A hole was cut through the partition wall so that Thomas could get to our press, which was the most ancient and approved G. Washington pattern with a possible speed of 250 an hour in the hands of an expert.

This arrangement rocked along for some months and young Thomas, tired of newspaper life in Paragould and the persistence of dissatisfied creditors threw up the sponge. It was then the editor of the *Soliphone*, at the solicitation of Mr. Coffman, took the outfit off his hands, on a credit of course, and Ross says he has not got pay for some of it yet. The two outfits were then consolidated, the partition walls between the two rooms torn out, and we had a pretty decent outfit, the best that had ever been in the town to that date. That was about 1897 and the *Soliphone* stayed in the old rookery until four years ago when it moved into the present

## NEWSPAPERS

quarters, which while lacking in some of the conveniences necessary to the business is the best home the *Soliphone* ever had, the most comfortable except, perhaps, the year it occupied the upstairs of the Globe drug store building.

### CHANGES IN NEWSPAPER STYLE

Many old newspapers, dating as far back as 1879, have been examined during the writing of this history. Perhaps the most valuable collection located was the one owned by Mrs. R. P. Taylor, of Little Rock, who has old copies of the *Soliphone* in bound volumes, covering most of the years from 1893 to 1910. A number of citizens of Paragould have saved a few scattered copies, dating back to the founding of the town.

In the examination of these newspapers, a change of style of writing was evident with the passing of the years. The friendly, conversational tone of the articles written around the turn of the century has been replaced by a brisk, businesslike statement of facts. The bulk of local "chatter," so evident in former days, has given way to summaries of world events.

More space was given to trivial social items than is now granted. A visit to a neighboring community merited from three lines to three inches of comment. The County School Examiner furnished two columns each week describing school matters of every sort. Small neighborhoods regularly contributed an account of local happenings. The *Soliphone* of April 13, 1911, gave a front page, full-column list of wedding presents, with the donors, in the account of the wedding of Miss

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Nina McKinney and Harry E. Jones. The account of the funeral of Dr. A. G. Dickson on January 29, 1909, listed the floral sprays, with the names of contributors.

As an example, one issue of the *Soliphone*, dated June 12, 1902, contained: (1) One and one-half columns describing the medal contest and graduation exercises of Thompson's Classical Institute; (2) A list of names and home addresses of all people registered at local hotels: thirteen at Hotel Amberg, twelve at Stancill House, and eleven at New Commercial; (3) One full column listing title and author of vocal and instrumental "Latest Hits Just Received from the Publishing House," including such titles as "Good Bye, Dollie Grey," "Any Old Place I Can Hang My Hat," and "Belles of Society Waltzes."

The advertisements of sixty years ago were "set up" much like the ones of today. Saul Bertig's store in Gainesville, before the founding of Paragould, advertised in the *Greene County Events* iron cooking stoves that bear no resemblance to the streamlined ranges of today. Evidently doctors were never needed, if the numerous patent medicine advertisements were true. The pictures of millinery are especially amusing—but that could be said of the weird creations of today.

## CHAPTER IX

### BANKS

#### OLD MORTGAGE RECORDS

BEFORE THE ADVENT of banks, it was customary for persons without funds to buy "on credit" or to borrow money from friends. A man's word was usually considered as good as his bond, and no note was required. That some businesslike men did demand notes and mortgages is evidenced by the records, from which the following examples are taken.

On July 28, 1877, G. N. Wadley borrowed \$9.38 from James McDaniel, giving a mortgage on two cows and one calf.<sup>1</sup> On the same day, James McDaniel advanced \$9.15 to J. W. Ward, taking a mortgage on "one bale of the first cotton gathered of the crop of mortgagor for the year 1877."<sup>2</sup> On May 26, 1877, John Turner borrowed \$20.00 from J. S. Anderson, giving as security a mule and two acres of cotton.<sup>3</sup>

On June 25, 1878, Daniel D. Mitchell obtained \$15.00 from J. M. Winder & Co., offering a mortgage on nine acres of cotton and nine acres of corn.<sup>4</sup> On May 17, 1879, W. R. Robinson borrowed \$5.00 from Jas. H. Herron, and gave a mortgage on two acres of cotton.<sup>5</sup> On March 14, 1882, I. H. Pillow was required to mortgage one mule, two horses, and five acres of

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 2, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

cotton, in order to secure \$25.00 from Less & Joseph.<sup>1</sup>

On March 31, 1887, R. A. Cole offered a mortgage on two steers and four acres of cotton, securing a loan of \$5.00 from Richard Jackson.<sup>2</sup> For the sum of \$150.00, obtained from H. C. Gramling on June 13, 1882, W. F. Morrow gave a mortgage on "six cows & their calves, one yoke of work oxen, one bay mare four years old, and twenty-two acres of cotton growing on the farm of H. C. Gramling."<sup>3</sup>

Extreme cases selected from the old records include the mortgage that J. T. McBride gave to P. K. Parsons for his entire crop for the year, in exchange for a loan of \$1.00 on May 12, 1885, and the case of J. T. Bartlett, who borrowed \$1.00 from W. C. Newberry on April 25, 1885, and mortgaged "one fleabitten gray horse about ten years old known as the Jarvis."<sup>4</sup>

One of the few large loans was made by J. R. & R. Jackson to Thomas J. Dacus on September 7, 1877, for \$800.00. The mortgage included "One Ames Steam Boiler & Engine, one Phoenix Cotton Gin Stand and one Todd Corn Grist Mill."<sup>5</sup>

Although most of these loans were probably repaid, very few of the mortgages were marked on the records as satisfied.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 2, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 3, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 2, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 3, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Greene County Mortgages and Deeds of Trust Record*, Book 2, p. 56.

## BANKS

### GREENE COUNTY BANK

Greene County Bank was incorporated February 10, 1888, with a capital stock of \$25,000, divided into one thousand shares at a par value of \$25 each. Stockholders were Dr. T. H. Wyse, John F. Brinkman, Richard Jackson, J. E. Reddick, J. F. Hasty & Sons, W. H. Jones, A. P. Mack, W. T. Witherington, Bertig Bros., and John Nilson. The Board of Directors for the first year consisted of Dr. T. H. Wyse, John Nilson, Richard Jackson, W. C. Hasty, and W. T. Witherington.<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of records about the closing of this bank, it is necessary to take the word of one of the stockholders, Dr. R. C. Grizzard, who stated that the bank failed on January 1, 1901. He said that the stockholders were assessed  $6\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the value of their stock in order that the depositors might be paid in full.<sup>2</sup>

### BANK OF PARAGOULD

The Bank of Paragould was incorporated March 22, 1889, with a capital stock of \$30,000, divided into twelve hundred shares of the value of \$25 each. Stockholders were C. Wall, A. P. Mack, H. W. Glasscock, A. A. Knox, E. S. Bray, A. Bertig, W. H. Jones, J. W. Crawford, Saul Bertig, W. J. McDonald, G. M. Rosengrant, J. F. Cardwell, B. H. Crowley, J. Dardinger, Oney Wall Kitchens, Elma Wall Ellis, D. D. Hodges, M. Claud Wall, T. R. Willcockson, W. A. H. McDaniel, J. H. Bryant, J. J. Downey, W. E. Baird, J. M.

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, December 12, 1945.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Reid, H. R. Schisler. Directors were C. Wall (President), W. H. Jones (Vice-President), A. A. Knox (Secretary), E. S. Bray (Cashier), A. P. Mack, J. W. Crawford, D. D. Hodges, and A. Bertig.<sup>1</sup>

On May 2, 1903, the capital stock was increased to \$50,000, according to State Bank Department records. Soon afterwards, proceedings were begun for the conversion of this bank into a national bank. On June 20, 1903, it became The First National Bank of Paragould.<sup>2</sup>

### NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE

The Bank of Commerce was incorporated July 3, 1901, with a capital stock of \$50,000, divided into 2,000 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were Eli Meiser, Richard Jackson, Earl Gramling, N. Donaldson, J. D. Block, T. B. Kitchens, L. U. Stedman, H. S. Trice, J. G. McKenzie, A. G. Dickson, Mrs. Nettie Neely, R. L. Alexander, Mrs. S. L. Wyse, J. D. Goldman, Julius Lesser, Ben Adler, Sol Adler, S. L. Joseph, Thos. Knight, D. C. Kennard, E. N. Royall, D. W. McPherson, M. F. Collier, R. C. Grizzard, John L. Matthews, C. A. Parker, H. J. Wrape. Board of Directors consisted of Eli Meiser (President), S. L. Joseph (Vice-President), T. B. Kitchens (Secretary and Treasurer), Richard Jackson, J. D. Block, R. L. Alexander, R. C. Grizzard.<sup>3</sup>

State Bank Department records reveal that the capital stock was increased to \$75,000 in 1906, and to \$100,000 in 1910.

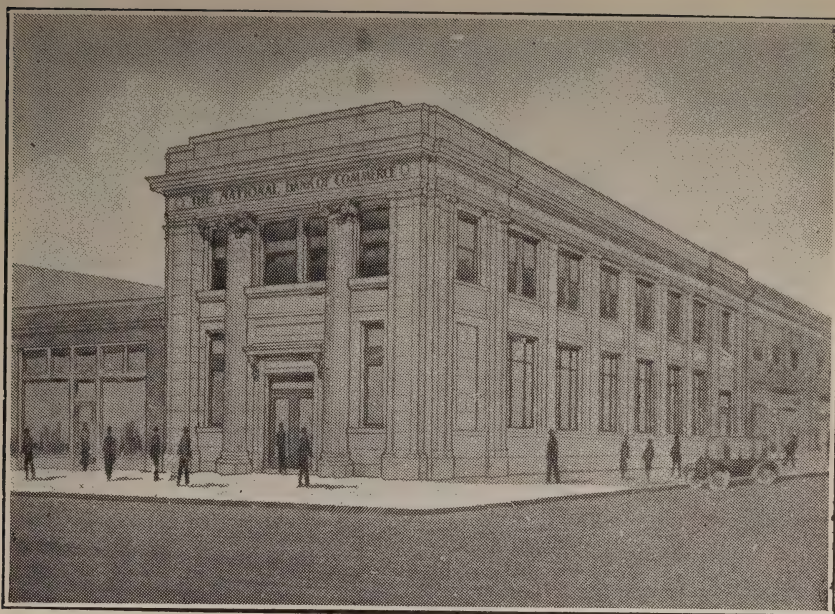
<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Information furnished by the Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, D. C.

<sup>3</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 242.



## BANKS



NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE, PARAGOULD

This bank became The National Bank of Commerce on April 27, 1911, receiving Charter No. 10004.<sup>1</sup>

On December 31, 1945, The National Bank of Commerce had total deposits amounting to \$5,380,-778.54. Officers of the bank for the year 1946 are: William F. Kirsch, President; R. W. Meriwether, Vice-President; R. E. Jacobs, Cashier; Mrs. Grace Ellis and Arthur W. Jackson, Assistant Cashiers. Bank employees are listed as: Miss Evelyn Long, Mrs. Helen Dover, and Mrs. Bernadine Ellis, Tellers; Hurt Faulkner, J. C. Edrington, and Miss Aline Phillips, Bookkeepers; and Miss Jackie Hyde, Stenographer. Members of the Board of Directors are: William F. Kirsch, R. W. Meriwether, R. R. Meriwether, H. W. Woosley,

<sup>1</sup> Information furnished by the Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, D. C.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

J. C. Ford, Telfair Stedman, Sam Lipscomb, A. H. Wrape, O. M. Atkins, J. G. Meiser, T. L. Payne, Maurice Cathey, and Harrold Scott.<sup>1</sup>

### NEW FIRST NATIONAL BANK

The First National Bank of Paragould was issued Charter No. 6846 on June 20, 1903. This was a conversion of The Bank of Paragould. Directors were the same as the former bank on closing, namely: A. Bertig (President), Saul Bertig, J. H. Kitchens, Jr. (Cashier), R. H. Weatherly, M. P. Huddleston, G. T. Breckenridge, and J. H. Kinsworthy.

The New First National Bank of Paragould was issued Charter No. 13155 on December 22, 1927,<sup>2</sup> assuming the assets and liabilities of The First National Bank.

On December 31, 1945, this bank had total deposits amounting to \$3,310,320.11. Officers of the bank for the year 1946 are: W. L. Gatz, President; J. H. Farrell, Vice-President; R. C. Mitchell, Vice-President and Cashier; Miss Elizabeth Lee and George Lockwood, Assistant Cashiers. Other employees are listed as: Mrs. Thelma Hodge and Miss Betty Jo Schuh, Tellers; Miss Marietta Castleberry, Miss Henrietta Proctor, Miss Joy Martin, and Mrs. Avon Schug, Bookkeepers; and D. G. Beauchamp, Attorney. Members of the Board of Directors are: W. L. Gatz, J. H. Farrell, E. N. Beisel, Leo Sellmeyer, and R. C. Mitchell.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Paragould Daily Press*, January 3, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Information furnished by the Comptroller of the Currency, Washington, D. C.

<sup>3</sup> *Paragould Daily Press*, January 3, 1946.

## BANKS

### BANK OF MARMADUKE

The Bank of Marmaduke was incorporated June 25, 1903, with a capital stock of \$15,000, divided into 600 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were W. E. Talley (400 shares), A. M. Hall, W. J. Walters, W. O. Waggoner, R. H. Gossett, A. F. House, J. R. Gossett, E. L. Kennedy, W. J. Lively, W. H. McBride, J. C. Gossett, R. B. Jones, Bettie Cary, F. C. Cary, W. R. Chandler. The Board of Directors consisted of W. H. Walters (President), W. R. Chandler (Vice-President), A. F. House (Secretary), W. O. Waggoner (Treasurer), R. B. Jones, J. B. Stone, W. E. Talley.<sup>1</sup>

According to records of the State Bank Department, this bank closed for liquidation December 23, 1926. The deposits at that time were listed as \$55,400. C. W. Hogan was appointed Special Deputy Bank Commissioner in charge of liquidation. The liquidation closed during the year July 1, 1928, to June 30, 1929. Sixty per cent dividends were paid.

### PARAGOULD TRUST COMPANY

The Paragould Trust Company was incorporated November 25, 1905, with a capital stock of \$100,000, divided into 4,000 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were P. J. Doerr, Saul Bertig, M. F. Collier, A. Bertig, Bluthenthal Herbroner & Co., A. H. Glasscock, G. W. Kirby, R. H. Weatherly, N. W. Pucket, M. G. Newsom, Mrs. M. G. Newsom, F. M. Scott, J. P. Robinson, Dave Loeb, Mrs. J. R. Taylor, E. J. Smith, J. H. Kitchens, M. P. Huddleston, Joe Bertig, G. C. John-

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 2, p. 331.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

ston, G. T. Hopkins. The Board of Directors consisted of M. F. Collier (President, Secretary, and Cashier), F. M. Scott (Vice-President), Joseph Mueller, A. H. Glasscock, M. G. Newsom, A. Bertig, Saul Bertig, G. C. Johnston, R. H. Weatherly, J. H. Kitchens, M. P. Huddleston.<sup>1</sup>

Records of the State Bank Department show that this bank closed for liquidation December 22, 1926, with deposits of \$413,400. Liquidation closed in January, 1929. Four dividends were paid, amounting to fifty-five per cent. The assets remaining at the close of liquidation were sold to D. W. Kempner for \$66,000.

### SECURITY BANK AND TRUST COMPANY

Security Bank and Trust Company was incorporated July 24, 1906, with a capital stock of \$100,000, divided into 1,000 shares of \$100 each. Stockholders were A. E. Ford, I. C. Leggitt, R. J. Kibler, A. A. Knox, W. O. Poole, J. A. White, J. T. Montgomery, P. J. Poole, Adele Taylor, G. O. Light, Mary A. Poole, W. M. Stitt, J. A. Poole, Bernice McMurray, Mabel I. Louckes. Directors were I. C. Leggitt (President), A. A. Knox (Vice-President), R. J. Kibler (Secretary and Treasurer), A. E. Ford, G. O. Light, J. T. Montgomery, W. O. Poole.<sup>2</sup>

On November 12, 1930, this bank was reorganized as The Security Bank and Trust Company, Paragould. After the reorganization was completed, this bank was issued on February 6, 1931, Charter No. 640 by the State Bank Department.<sup>3</sup> At that time, the

<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 3, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> State Bank Department records.

## BANKS

capital stock was listed at \$50,000, divided into 2,000 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders then were Jas. W. Alexander, W. C. Bradsher, E. R. Browning, W. E. Ellington, J. C. Honey, Sam McHaney, J. A. Poole (Trustee), L. V. Rhine, L. G. Staub, Edgar Seay, Ike Willcockson, and Sam McHaney (Trustee).<sup>1</sup>

On December 31, 1945, this bank had total deposits amounting to \$3,085,655.98. Officers of the bank for the year 1946 are: James W. Alexander, President; Sam P. McHaney, Vice-President; E. R. Browning, Cashier; Mrs. Emily Meiser, Assistant Cashier. Other employees are listed as: Miss Reba Neely and Mrs. Mary Bynum, Tellers; Sam Lee McHaney, Miss Bonnie Holcomb, Miss Virginia Smith, Bookkeepers; and Zeke Taylor, Manager of the Marmaduke window. Members of the Board of Directors are: James W. Alexander, Sam P. McHaney, E. R. Browning, Ike Willcockson, R. V. McCoy, J. E. Winn, John Honey, L. G. Staub, and Dr. W. E. Ellington.<sup>2</sup>

## BANK OF WALCOTT

An unsuccessful attempt to start a bank at Walcott was made in 1905. The Bank of Walcott was incorporated December 19, 1905, with a capital stock of \$50,000, divided into 2,000 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were T. J. Sharum, W. G. McClamrock, C. W. White, J. N. Beakley, C. B. White. The Board of Directors consisted of T. J. Sharum (President), W. G. McClamrock (Vice-President), J. N. Beakley (Secretary), C. B. White (Treasurer), and C. W. White. These men were speculators from outside the

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Articles of Incorporation*, Book 5, p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> *Paragould Daily Press*, January 4, 1946.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

county. Since they were able to subscribe only \$10,000 of the promised \$50,000, the bank failed to materialize.<sup>1</sup>

The second attempt was more successful. The Bank of Walcott was incorporated January 5, 1910, with a capital stock of \$12,500, divided into 500 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were J. M. Tyner, J. L. Dacus, J. C. Pillow, W. P. Bowlin, W. C. Willcockson, J. W. Seay, J. B. Field, W. T. Lands, Thad Cothren, J. W. Light, Eli Meiser, L. U. Stedman, J. E. Newberry, W. T. Stedman, Richard Jackson, T. B. Kitchens, J. D. Block, W. F. Kirsch, J. G. Meiser, J. H. McPherson, B. H. Crowley, W. T. Crowley, J. M. Halley. The Board of Directors consisted of J. M. Tyner (President), W. T. Stedman, T. B. Kitchens, J. W. Seay, J. W. Light, W. C. Willcockson, J. M. Halley, J. D. Block, and Eli Meiser.<sup>2</sup>

State Bank Department records reveal that this bank was voluntarily liquidated through the National Bank of Commerce, Paragould, on June 6, 1924.

## FARMERS BANK OF MARMADUKE

The Farmers Bank of Marmaduke was incorporated March 8, 1911, with a capital stock of \$25,000, divided into 1,000 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were R. E. Bradsher, H. W. Brown, J. G. Meiser, Eli Meiser, J. R. Burke, J. W. Lipscomb. Directors were: Eli Meiser (President), J. R. Burke (Vice-President), J. W. Lipscomb (Secretary), R. E. Bradsher, J. G. Meiser.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Incorporation Reports*, Book 3, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> *Greene County Articles of Incorporation*, Book 4, p. 17.

## BANKS

According to State Bank Department records, this bank went into voluntary liquidation February 1, 1933, through the National Bank of Commerce, Paragould, with deposits of \$49,534.80. Depositors were repaid in full.

### BANK OF GAINESVILLE

The Bank of Gainesville was incorporated March 7, 1912, with a capital stock of \$10,000, divided into 400 shares of \$25 each. Stockholders were M. C. Graham, C. W. Stevens, J. W. Roberts, J. C. Farmer, J. M. Roberts, Bob Maxwell, J. R. Penny, M. F. Cotton, P. F. Norton, J. H. Turk, G. W. Pigue, A. P. Hammond, A. L. Eaker, N. E. Williams, E. M. Ford. Directors were M. C. Graham (President), J. C. Farmer (Vice-President), N. E. Williams (Secretary), G. W. Pigue, E. M. Ford.<sup>1</sup> This bank went into voluntary liquidation, January 22, 1913.<sup>2</sup>

### BANK OF LAFE

The Bank of Lafe was issued Charter No. 476 by the State Bank Department, on March 10, 1919. Other records of the incorporation are not available.

This bank was liquidated through Security Bank and Trust Company, Paragould, on February 20, 1928. E. R. Browning was appointed Special Deputy Bank Commissioner in charge of liquidation. On August 5, 1935, the Chancery Court signed a final order closing the liquidation and discharging the Bank Commissioner and the Special Deputy. Oscar H. Berner was named as Trustee for the stockholders.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Greene County Articles of Incorporation*, Book 5, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> State Bank Department records.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME REMINISCENCES

#### EXPLANATION

THERE IS something individual and interesting about every person's life story. This chapter attempts to convey an inkling of the type and variety of information secured from personal interviews with the people who have known Greene County for a long time. It reflects the history of settlements, the struggles against primitive conditions, and the ultimate discarding of the old for something that is new, and possibly better. Above all, this chapter is a tribute to the remarkable memory possessed by these people who have passed a lifetime in this locality, and are glad to share their recollections with anyone who is interested.

#### OLD GAINESVILLE

Dr. R. C. Grizzard, who moved to Gainesville from Tennessee in October, 1882, states that there were about three hundred or three hundred fifty people living at Gainesville at that time. He says there were five stores: Jackson Dry Goods Company, Less and Joseph, Wyse and Kuykendall, P. K. Parsons General Store, and H. W. Glasscock General Store. Dr. T. H. Wyse and Dr. Calvin Wall were retired physicians residing in Gainesville. The practicing physicians were Dr. M. V. Camp, Dr. Tom Thorn, and Dr. J. P. Gregory. Lawyers of Gainesville were Judge L. L. Mack and his son, A. P. Mack, W. S.

## *SOME REMINISCENCES*

Luna, and John B. Boykin. There was a school there, under the direction of a Professor Harvey, who was succeeded by George Hopkins. The only church was Methodist, with Rev. Watson as pastor. Later a Presbyterian church was added.

There was not a brick building in the town. All of the houses were frame; most of them had been painted at some time; all were lighted with coal oil lamps. Since there were no banks, people kept their money hidden at home. The first survey placed the railroad through the center of town, on land owned by Dr. Calvin Wall. Dr. Grizzard says that Dr. Wall was not willing to give the land for the right-of-way, and asked for a second survey. The second survey placed the tracks about a mile from the center of town. Had the railroad gone according to the first survey, the history of Gainesville might have taken a different turn.

When Paragould began to draw the citizens of Gainesville, John B. Boykin sold his home in Gainesville to Dr. Grizzard and moved to the new county seat. He built the house at the corner of South Fourth Street and Garland Street, now the Lackner home. This was the show place of the town. Dr. Grizzard says that when he paid his first visit to Paragould someone took him to the south door of the court house to view the fine Boykin home. There were no buildings to interfere with the view from the court house to the new home. In January, 1891, Dr. Grizzard joined the procession of people moving from Gainesville to Paragould.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, December 12, 1945.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

### MEMORIES OF MARMADUKE

Mr. William M. Foster, of Marmaduke, has lived in the vicinity for seventy-seven years. He remembers the railroad coming through, and the beginning of the town. He says that C. P. Huckabay built the first store in 1883, and that T. T. Ross built the second store in 1884. The Baptists built the first church building in the town in 1894, followed by the Methodists about 1902. The depot was built about 1900.

Mr. Foster says that the first big lumber mill in Marmaduke was started about 1902, and owned by J. Y. Turner. The next was about 1907, owned by the Vail Donaldson Company. Mr. Turner put in part of the tramway for transporting logs from the bottoms to the mill. The Donaldson Company extended the tramway, and had a stave factory, a box factory, and a saw mill.

Mr. Foster recalls that the first doctors were Dr. Lewis, Dr. Baker, Dr. Price, two doctors named McCauley, Dr. Cavitt, Dr. Lytton, and Dr. Hawkins.

The newspapers were "The Cackler," by R. A. Dunn; a paper by J. C. Boone; and the "Marmaduke News," by Mrs. O. G. Bradsher. The latter newspaper was printed in Rector and distributed in Marmaduke for three or four years after about 1923.

Mr. Foster says that the first school was a little wooden structure built by donations, before the town was incorporated in 1883. The present school was built about 1915, according to his recollection.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

The first election that he remembers was held in his yard in 1872. He says that Dr. Ed Bradsher owned one of the first automobiles in Marmaduke, a little blue car without a top.

For a man of his age, Mr. Foster has a remarkable memory. While he may be incorrect in some of these dates, he has a clear picture in his mind about the development of the community.<sup>1</sup>

### EARLY SETTLERS OF LAFE

Mrs. Will Gerdes told of the early settlement of Upper Lafe. Her father, Herman Toelkin, had thirty-five cents and an axe when he got off the train at Gainesville in 1886. He began cutting railroad ties and selling them to the railroad company. As soon as he had saved enough money, he paid the railroad company \$40 for forty acres of hill land, built the little log shack shown at the right in the picture that accompanies this sketch, and sent for his family. Mrs. Toelkin and the children came on the train to Gainesville, bringing with them a dresser, a wardrobe, a bedstead, and some chairs. After Mr. Toelkin paid Mr. Jackson for hauling the wagon-load of family and furniture to the cabin, he found himself with only seventy-five cents.

Again, by cutting and selling railroad ties, he saved money to buy a yoke of oxen for hauling ties, increased his land holdings to three hundred acres, and began advertising in the newspaper "Germania" for German Lutherans to come to settle in the community. Many came in response to his plea. He met the new-

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, June 11, 1946.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY



EARLY SETTLERS OF LAFE

comers at the train and acted as land agent in showing them other available sections of hill land. This group of congenial German settlers founded the Lutheran church at Upper Lafe and later at Lafe.

Mrs. Will Gerdes was fifteen months old when she came to Arkansas. When she was ten years old, the family had a picture made in front of their home. She is the little girl in the center of the picture. The original cabin is shown at the right, adjoining the larger house that was built after their arrival.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview, August 16, 1946.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

### THE NAMING OF LAFE

Mr. T. C. Barner, of Lafe, came to the community with his brother, Henry Barner, in 1895 from New Haven, Missouri. At that time there were in the vicinity thirty-five families for whom the Barners had threshed wheat in Missouri. The Barner brothers brought their threshing machine with them, and threshed wheat in the surrounding territory. Henry Barner's sons still carry on the threshing and milling business.

According to Mr. T. C. Barner, the settlement used to be known as Newberry, named for a sawmill owner. However, the postmaster had named the post-office Loulyma, combining the names of his three daughters, Louise, Lilly, and Mary. There was considerable confusion caused by freight being sent to Newberry, while the mail was addressed to Loulyma. A number of citizens, searching for an uncommon name, decided to name the town in honor of a local merchant, Lafayette (Lafe) Miller. A petition was circulated, and the town was named Lafe.

When Mr. Barner came in 1895, not much land was cleared around Lafe. Land that now sells for \$50 per acre was then selling at \$4 per acre. Hearing of the cheap land, many people came from the North and cleared the land rapidly in order to raise wheat. For many years, there was a flour mill in operation at Lafe.<sup>1</sup>

### COUNTRY SCHOOLS

William K. Kelley, a teacher in Greene County for thirty-eight years and in Craighead County two years, recalls that one of his first terms of school was

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, July 30, 1946.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

conducted without a building, under a big oak tree just east of Bethel. The six young pupils and Mr. Kelley ran to a nearby dwelling in case of rain, during the three months' summer session in 1898.

He says that most of the schools in which he taught were one-room boxed houses, with strips covering the cracks. They were so open that in winter the pupils had to huddle around the stove to keep warm. Once when he was teaching at Brown's Chapel, the directors failed to provide fuel, so teacher and pupils cut down trees and chopped them into wood for fuel.

Most of the schools were equipped with a small blackboard, crayon, an eraser, and a few books. School was in session from early morning until about five o'clock in the afternoon. Although the better districts provided a three months' session in winter and two months in summer, there were many other schools in session only three months per year.

Mr. Kelley's salary varied from \$30 to \$125 per month. He taught at Spring Grove, St. Paul (now Dixie), Bethel Station, Big Island, Walcott, Lorado, Marmaduke, Village, Pruett's Chapel, Brown's Chapel. Oak Grove, and Brushy Ridge.

His term at Lorado began on Monday before Thanksgiving in 1908, and two days later the school building was demolished by a tornado without injury to a pupil.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, March 22, 1946.

## *SOME REMINISCENCES*

### BROWN'S CHAPEL SCHOOL REUNION

W. A. Branch's parents moved into the Brown's Chapel School District No. 31 in 1891. Mr. Branch attended the one-room school until he was eighteen years old, and then taught in the same school for eight years. He received \$30 per month for his teaching, remaining at the school from 7 a. m. to 5:30 p. m.

There were eighty-six pupils enrolled in the one-room school in 1902. According to Mr. Branch's count, seventy-three of them are still living. Of the thirteen dead, nine are buried at Brown's Chapel cemetery.

Beginning in 1944, the pupils of Brown's Chapel school of forty years ago have held an annual reunion on the last Thursday evening in March. From four hundred to a thousand people attend the exhibitions at this reunion. Former pupils say nursery recitations, put on plays, have spelling bees, play the fiddle, and in other ways duplicate the program of the last day of school. Men and women of fifty or sixty, who would not make a talk in public, take their turn in the school exhibition.

Some of Mr. Branch's former pupils of Brown's Chapel school include Paul McLerkin, Harvey McLerkin, Ike Willcockson, Mrs. Grace (Willcockson) Coburn, Mrs. Gertrude (Willcockson) Gilbert, Mrs. Maude (Willcockson) Cleveland, Mrs. Ruth (Willcockson) Barron, Robert Sain, Ben Sain, Mrs. Lillie (Crockett) Fletcher, Mrs. Harriett (Crockett) Scott, Mrs. Minnie (Rogers) Scott, Mrs. Effie (Rogers) Taylor, Mrs. Anna (Brown) Walker, Mrs. Sally (Hall) Rogers, Don Hall, Paul Hall, and Jack Brown.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview, July 22, 1946.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

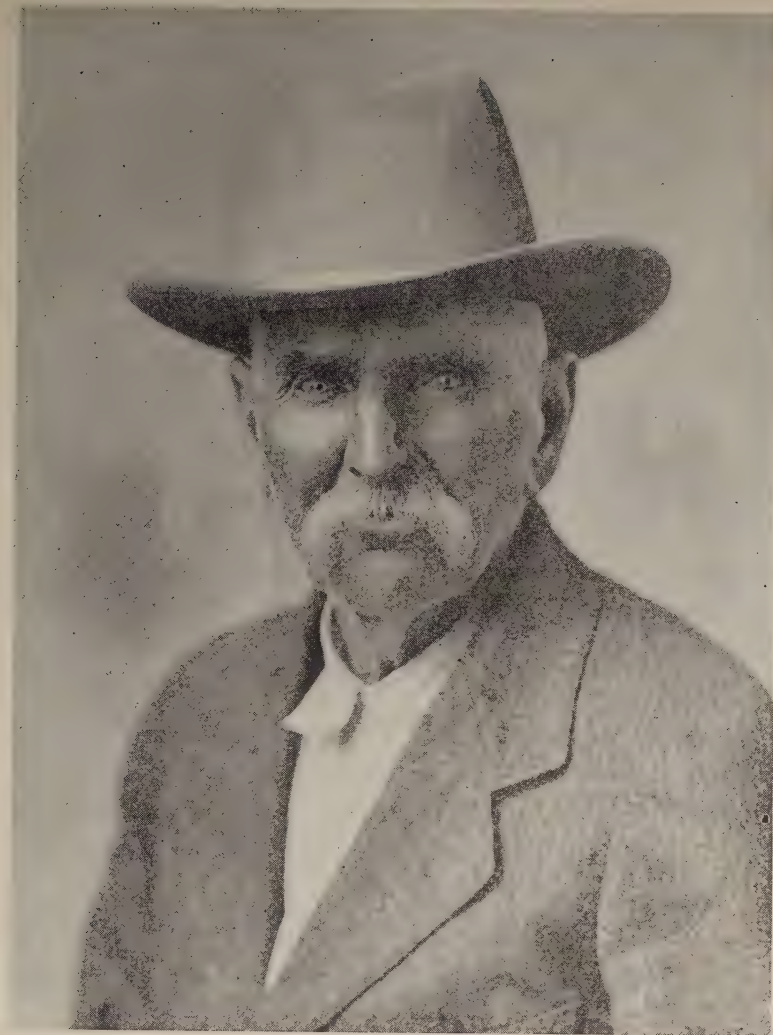
### BEGINNINGS OF PARAGOULD

Mrs. Ora Yantis is probably the oldest citizen of Paragould, from the standpoint of length of residence. In 1881, her father, W. J. McDonald, paid \$40 in cord wood for a lot on the northeast corner of Pruett and Emerson streets. Here he built his home, before bringing his family in the latter part of 1881 to the little town of approximately one hundred residents. This house has been moved twice, and is now located near the east end of Main Street, still in usable condition.

Mrs. Yantis recalls that she was four years old when she started to school in October, 1882, to Professor George Hopkins, the first teacher in Paragould, in a little building on Emerson Street, about where the Midwest Dairy office now stands. She took music lessons from Mrs. Wiley Stancil, the first music teacher in the town, in a building on Court Street, about where Garner Drug Company is now located.

Mrs. Yantis states that she remembers that the County Sheriff, T. R. Willcockson, her father, W. J. McDonald, and his hired man, Cub Drafton, were the ones who moved the county safe from Gainesville to Paragould in 1884. She says that Mr. Drafton took Mr. McDonald's prize team of bay horses, "Bill" and "Ball," hitched to a wagon, with McDonald and the sheriff preceding on horseback, armed ready for trouble, in case the citizens of Gainesville should protest the removal of the records. She states that they met no resistance, and transferred the safe and records to the new county seat.

*SOME REMINISCENCES*



WILLIAM JEFFERSON McDONALD



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

W. J. McDonald was the building contractor for two-thirds of the business houses of Paragould. When the town was only one year old, he sponsored a skating rink on East Main Street. He was one of the promoters of the "Opera House," where such entertainers as "Emma Warren and Her Players" amused the people of Paragould during the decade preceding 1900. Mrs. Yantis recalls a jousting tournament and several horse races in which her father participated.<sup>1</sup>

### EARLY DAYS IN PARAGOULD

Mrs. Glendora Parker was a victim of peritonitis, and had traveled in four states in search of health, when she and her husband and little daughter arrived in Paragould in time for Christmas, 1885. They stayed at the Paragould Hotel, a frame house located where Graber's store is now. From the first, Mrs. Parker's health improved. The sixty-one years that she has spent here have been kind to her. Now, at the age of eighty-seven, she is busily engaged in completing one of her many scrapbooks.

Her husband, Dr. J. S. Parker, was a dentist. Mrs. Parker says that she was the first beauty operator in Paragould, giving shampoos and waves in her home. She now lives with her daughter, Mrs. Van Martindale, in Paragould.

Mrs. Parker's recollection of Paragould in the early days is that there were several livery stables, blacksmith shops, and saloons. The women of the town organized the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and were very active in attempting to drive out the saloons.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, May 7, 1946.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

The first public school in Paragould was situated on the ground now occupied by the High School. The Parker family lived across the street in a house where the Dr. Hardesty property is now. There was no well at the school, so the school children had to use the well in Mrs. Parker's back yard for drinking water.

Court Street was a "lob-lolley," Mrs. Parker says. One day she saw a team stuck in the mire on Court Street in front of her house. The driver was beating the horses unmercifully. Mrs. Parker ran out, asked him to stop, and was told to see if she could get the team up the hill. Forgetting her overshoes, she waded into the mire, petted the horses a few minutes, and walked by their side as they pulled the wagon up the muddy hill. This is quite a contrast to our paved Court Street of today.<sup>1</sup>

## CYCLONE OF 1892

Mrs. Lilla Porter recounted the story of a cyclone that hit Paragould on the night of December 6, 1892, ripping off the east end of the new home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Hays, at 611 West Court Street.

The east room downstairs—the parlor—had everything blown out of it except the big square piano. Typical of the freakishness of storms, the big piano was stopped by the little quarter-round which remained of the east wall. Mrs. Hays' two new dresses, hanging in the east room upstairs, were blown to Glasscock's pasture, about where Paul Webster lives on Highland Street. Mrs. Porter says that the front

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, June 7, 1946.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

porch was blown from their house, and the board sidewalks were blown against the front of the house.

The John Ritter house, just east of the Hays home, was not yet completed, and was completely demolished by the storm, except for the foundation. On this same foundation, the Ritter house was rebuilt. The W. H. Jones' home stands today on this original foundation.

Very little damage was done to other homes in the town.<sup>1</sup>

### FIRST HARDWARE STORE



MERIWETHER HARDWARE STORE IN 1884

R. W. Meriwether came to Paragould with his parents in the spring of 1883. His father, W. W. Meriwether, built the first hardware store in Greene County, facing Main Street, in Paragould. R. W. Meriwether recalls that Main Street contained the busi-

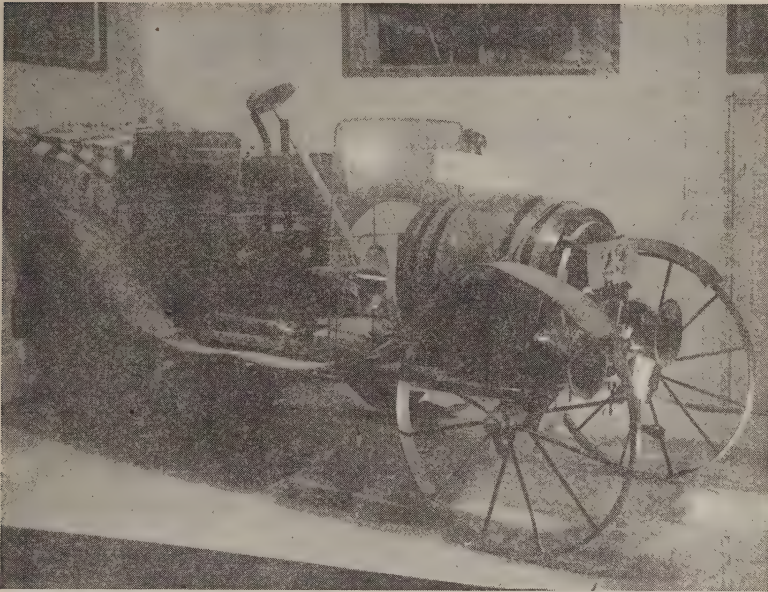
<sup>1</sup> Interview, August 17, 1946.



## SOME REMINISCENCES

ness houses, as far west as Second Street. When it reached Third Street, it hit Willis Pruett's field and he would not allow further encroachment. Then the merchants began opening stores along the street now known as Pruett Street. About 1886 the elder Meriwether hired Ike Bard (for whom the settlement of Bard was named) to move the store around to face Pruett Street.

The original store measured 25' x 50', with a small office in the rear. R. W. Meriwether slept in the



FIRST AUTOMOBILE IN PARAGOULD

Before there was ever an automobile in Paragould, Lilbourn Meriwether saw a picture of one and, with the help of the employees of Meriwether's Store, set up a model in the store window. Of course, the car would not run. The name of the beauty was the "Buttermilk Special," since the engine was made from a barrel churn, and the steering gear was a churn dasher. The wheels were cultivator wheels. The fenders were made out of a piece of rubber belting. The seats were made from part of a coal oil stove. The gas tank was a thermos jug. The windshield was a fireplace guard. The lights were two brass cuspidors. The year model of this car was approximately 1912.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

office to guard the store. Since there were no banks, and the Meriwethers had one of the few safes in the county, they handled the payroll for the Wrape, Rosen-grant, and Brinkman mills.

The home built by W. W. Meriwether in 1883 still stands in good condition at 324 West Garland Street, and is occupied by his daughter, Mrs. W. W. Bandy, and her husband.<sup>1</sup>

### OLD PARMLEY STATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Moore lives at 308 East Court Street, in the same house to which she moved in 1888. Her husband, William Moore, was a railroad section master for twenty-one years, and is survived by three sons, who are employed by as many railroad companies.

A small two-room depot was erected by the Iron Mountain railroad company at the point that Highland and Lake streets join, causing the jog in the present streets at the location of the station. For twenty years Highland Street was known as Depot Street.

This little station bore the name of Parmley, and was used for only a short time before the Cotton Belt railroad established a station at the crossing of the two roads. Mrs. Moore and her son Homer state that a Mr. Black conducted a pottery in the abandoned Parmley station, producing churns, crocks, and jars until about 1890. At that time Mr. William Moore received orders to tear down the old depot. He was using a large crew of men as section hands, so he moved the

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, May 10, 1946.

## *SOME REMINISCENCES*

building to the back of his yard, facing Emerson Street, and used the two rooms for sleeping quarters for sixteen men. Mrs. Moore ran a boarding house for a number of years, and says that she fed from twenty to fifty section hands most of the time.

The old Parmley station stands today at 309 East Emerson Street, in good repair and in use as a dwelling house. The exterior has been covered with roll siding, concealing the original construction of heavy yellow poplar timbers, held together with pegs. The interior is unchanged after sixty-four years, neatly ceiled with hand-dressed lumber, and wearing a coat of yellow paint, characteristic of railroad property. The original small-paned windows are still in use. The house is about twenty-eight feet long, with a door connecting the two rooms, and a door opening from each room to the south porch.<sup>1</sup>

### THOMPSON'S CLASSICAL INSTITUTE

Mrs. John Meiser was Miss Mary D. Yantis when she graduated from Thompson's Classical Institute in 1902. Miss Annie Stedman, Guy Simmons, and Roger Williams were the other members of this class, which was the first class to graduate from the school. There was a larger group to graduate in 1903. Soon after this, Professor R. S. Thompson's health failed; his partner, George R. Hopkins, went to Little Rock as head of Peabody School; and the great classical school ceased to exist. Paragould High School had its first graduating class in 1903, and replaced the private school thereafter.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, May 14, 1946.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Mrs. Meiser still has the portfolio of twenty-eight maps that she made during the one year that she attended the public school at the age of eleven. These maps are superior to the type of art work done by students of today. After this one year in the public school, she attended T. C. I. until she graduated.

For the graduation exercises, the four students borrowed caps and gowns from people in town who had bought them for graduation from Galloway College and other schools. The exercises were held in the Baptist Church, formerly the Opera House.

The program consisted of essays by Mary D. Yantis and Annie Stedman, salutatory address by Roger Williams, and valedictory address by Guy Simmons. Mrs. Meiser still has the manuscript for her essay on "Architecture," and a copy of the *Soliphone* of June 12, 1902, describing the program. There were piano solos by Mary D. Yantis, Olive Terrill, and Edith Mack, and an "elocution" contest, with Eva Hester, Carlee Swindle, Lena Terrill, Lillian DeWeese, and Lurline Grizzard, participating. The winner of the medal was Lurline Grizzard.

Twenty-five or more former students were in attendance at the dedication of a monument to Professor Thompson in 1939.<sup>1</sup>

## DRAINAGE OF LOWLANDS

Jason Light states that before 1906 there were vast tracts of worthless lowlands in Greene County. He says that there was one slough one-fourth mile long

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, June 8, 1946.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

that stood in water until the first of July, where the town of Light is now located. Roads were overflowed most of the year, and the whole country from Delaplane to Sedgwick was in lagoons and swamps. The lowlands east of Paragould were entirely under water. Mosquitoes thrived to the detriment of the scattered settlers. Doctors were unable to reach families living at Mitchell's Point, two miles north of Bard.

During the spring of 1906, Mr. Light made his campaign for County Judge, promising to drain the lowlands if elected. For a while before election time there was a period of drowth, when everyone seemed to forget the need for drainage. A sudden deluge preceded the day of election, and helped to turn the vote in favor of Mr. Light. He was elected County Judge,



DREDGE BOAT OPERATED BY LEWIS MAYO IN 1910  
IN DRAINING CACHE RIVER



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

and spent six years in that capacity, working steadily toward the goal of drainage of the low lands, even against popular opinion. Other judges followed, who seemed to disregard the cost to the farmers in their zeal to drain the land. As a result, hundreds of farmers lost their lands because they were unable to pay the enormous taxes.

Today a person can look in every direction at Light or Delaplaine and see farms, where once stood swamps. Some of the eastern lowlands still overflow, but are usable for crops about three years out of four. Drainage of the land was naturally followed by improved roads. Now there are modern consolidated schools at Dixie, Delaplaine, Light, Alexander, and Lakeside, on land reclaimed by drainage.<sup>1</sup>

### FREE MAIL DELIVERY

Mr. Albert Baine says that he was teaching at Goobertown, Craighead County, during the school year of 1904-1905, and had to go six miles for his mail. He wrote to Congressman Macon, requesting instructions for securing rural mail service. Following these instructions, Mr. Baine drew up a map showing the proposed route for the carrier to go to Goobertown and return over a different road, a total trip of approximately twenty-four miles. It was then necessary to secure the signature of one hundred persons living on the proposed route. Some people refused to sign the petition, thinking they would have to pay for the service, but enough signatures were secured to meet the requirements. The map and the petition were presented

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, December 13, 1945.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

in proper order, and the first rural free delivery of mail out of Paragould started February 15, 1905. Mr. Baine became the second rural mail carrier in 1906. When free delivery of mail in Paragould went into effect November 16, 1908, Mr. Baine was one of the first city carriers.<sup>1</sup>

## INDIAN RELICS

J. Harry McPherson has been interested in Indian relics since he was a small boy. His collection of arrow heads now numbers approximately 16,000, pieces, graded and arranged in boxes. In addition, he has quite an assortment of flint chips of various types, and a few pieces of Indian pottery.

Mr. McPherson once owned a tract of land on Jones Ridge, in Greene County, where there is evidence that a large Indian settlement had been located. There is a well-defined mound there, and an abundance of chipped flint. This is within a mile of Delaplaine.

Near Beech Grove there seems to have been a large camp site, as shown by the chips of stone left from the manufacture of stone relics. One mound was bisected by Cache River Ditch No. 1, but one large mound remains.

Mr. McPherson has been active in trying to preserve the Indian mounds of the County, which are fast disappearing because of plowing, building roads, and visitation by relic collectors.

There are a number of Indian mounds in Greene County, including a group in the northwest part of

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, May 24, 1946.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

the county, on Cache River, about two miles north of Beech Grove; a group in the extreme southeast corner



INDIAN EFFIGY

of the county, on St. Francis River, in the vicinity of Schugtown; and a group in the southwest part of the county, on Cache River, near Fontaine.

Mr. McPherson says that there is a house located on a partially-wrecked mound at Schugtown, nine miles southeast of Paragould. In April, 1933, a woman tenant was sweeping her yard on top of this mound, discovered an object in the soil, and

dug up a stone effigy about fifteen inches tall. This was later sold to the University of Arkansas for \$75, and became a part of the University museum. A picture of this effigy appears on this page.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAMPION RIFLE SHOT

Charlie Stedman was a personal friend of the world champion rifleman, Captain Elmer E. Stubbs, who used to entertain the residents of Gainesville by shooting plums from his daughter Cora's head. She would sometimes hold a plum between her thumb and

<sup>1</sup> Interview, June 13, 1946.

## SOME REMINISCENCES

forefinger, while her father stood forty feet away and shot the plum from between her fingers.

Captain Stubbs came to Paragould to help in the first celebration at the Fairgrounds. Dr. Grizzard was the leader of the band. Because of the mud, it required four mules to pull the wagon carrying Dr. Grizzard and his thirteen musicians to the Fairgrounds. Captain Stubbs entertained the crowd by shooting at oranges and glass balls as they were tossed into the air.

The residents of Gainesville to this day point out the hill where Captain Stubbs used to practice. He named his son Walter for his friend, Charles Walter Stedman.<sup>1</sup>

Many old residents recount the story of Captain Stubbs defeating Bogartus, of England, recognized as the champion rifle shot of the world. Williams, in his "History of Craighead County," tells the story, but states that the defeated man was named Bodine.

Shortly after the railroad came through Jonesboro in the early eighties, a unique character located in Jonesboro and opened a gunshop in Happy Hollow about where Link's Cafe is located today. The man, Capt. E. E. Stubbs, came down from Greene County to seek his fortune in the new metropolis of Craighead, which was fast gaining a reputation as a boom town, and was the center of a vast hunting section which naturally appealed to men of his type.

Captain Stubbs had long flowing locks of silver, and keen piercing eyes of gray. He always wore a ten-gallon hat, was tall and straight, a splendid specimen of the Buffalo Bill type, typical plainsman of the Old West. He came

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, August 1, 1946.



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

here with the reputation of being the champion rifle shot of America, and those who saw him shoot in the old shooting galleries along Happy Hollow, felt sure no man of any age was his equal with the rifle.

One day a man had the bold temerity to test his prowess with the rifle, by issuing a challenge to compete in a shooting match for the championship of the world. The challenger was none other than Colonel Mark I. Bodine, of the Royal Gun Club of the Transvaal, a native of England. Captain Stubbs readily accepted the challenge and agreed to meet Bodine in Jonesboro.

Accordingly a date was set, February 1st, 1896. It was agreed that each contestant was to shoot at one hundred targets in the air, the targets selected being native Arkansas quail and pigeons. The event was widely advertised, with reduced fares on all railroads in the country, and an enclosed park was erected on North Main Street, which was later used as a ball park. Seating capacity was arranged for four thousand people and most of the space was occupied the day of the match.

The hotels and boarding houses were filled with sportsmen from all sections of the country, and the flotsam and jetsam of gamblers and sporting gentry converged on the town in great numbers. The writer remembers as a lad of fifteen the many coops of quail and pigeons on display daily at vantage points along Main Street, which were trapped for the great shooting match.

Colonel Bodine arrived with an array of supporters who were willing to bet and they were readily accommodated by the group of sportsmen who were already on the scene. Bodine was a

## SOME REMINISCENCES

heavy, pudgy man of stern visage, and had won a great reputation as a big game hunter in Africa and as an expert army shot, the pride of all England.

A long box-like construction similar to a hog pen had been erected some distance in front of the shooters, constructed of heavy timber so a rifle ball could not penetrate same in case of a stray shot. Under this small shed the birds had been assembled, and at a given signal a quail or pigeon would be released until each marksman had an even hundred targets. It was a cold, gray day, and those seated high in the stand could hardly distinguish the swift flying birds against the dark background of the surrounding woods, yet Captain Stubbs killed the birds with unerring accuracy whether they flew straight away or at angles, and before the match was half over it was clearly evident that Colonel Bodine was not in Stubbs' class. An effort was made by the writer to get an old newspaper file of this sporting event, but it could not be located. However, as I remember it, Stubbs won the match better than two to one and was crowned champion rifle shot of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, *History of Craighead County*, pp. 366-368.

## CHAPTER XI

### BIOGRAPHY

THE HISTORY of a county is written in the history of its individuals. The people whose story is told in this chapter are a fair sample of the citizens of Greene County. Perhaps a thousand others might represent the county as well, but, due to lack of time required in contacting people, these few have been selected.

#### D. J. BLOUNT

Dillon J. Blount was born October 14, 1878, near Pleasant Plains, Independence County, Arkansas, the son of James A. and Dillie (Petty) Blount. He attended elementary school and high school in Pleasant Plains, and served as school director and road overseer before leaving Pleasant Plains.

Mr. Blount has spent most of his lifetime in the drug business, having been employed by the East Lands Pharmacy of Judsonia, Arkansas; Utley Drug Company, of Senath, Missouri; and Crady Drug Company, of Sikeston, Missouri. Since coming to Paragould in 1915, he has been pharmacist for Fisher Drug Company, Edwards Drug Company, and Hardesty-Lackey Drug Company. He was with the Lamb-Garner Drug Company for seven years. This is his eighteenth consecutive year as a member of the Walden-Blount Drug Company. In addition, Mr. Blount in early life had a variety of experience, having been foreman for a stove company at Sikeston, Missouri, agent for the

## BIOGRAPHY

Metropolitan Insurance Company at Blytheville, and salesman for Beard's Temple of Music in Paragould.

For ten years, Mr. Blount taught music, trained bands, and directed the singing for evangelistic campaigns in Independence, Baxter, Jackson, and White counties. He was choir director for the Church of Christ in Paragould for eighteen years.

Mr. Blount married Miss Margie Ann Jenkins, of Paragould, in 1916. Her parents were George and Dora (Scott) Jenkins. Mrs. Blount passed away April 1, 1945.

D. J. Blount, Jr., was born in 1922, graduated from Paragould High School in 1939, and from Freed-Hardeman College, in Henderson, Tennessee, in 1941. He also attended the University of Mississippi and the University of Alabama. He received his basic training in the Army at Camp Sibert, Alabama, where he served as regimental bugler. He received the Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Arkansas Medical School at Little Rock in 1944, and the M. D. degree from the same school in 1946. He is now an interne at the Charity Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana. In all of his schooling, D. J., Jr., has made outstanding records in scholarship, music, and school activities.

## W. A. BRANCH

On April 26, 1884, John H. and Mary F. (Burton) Branch named their new son William Andrew. They were living at the time on a hillside farm in the Wood's Chapel community in Greene County. W. A. Branch attended his first term of school at Wood's Chapel in 1890. Every year since that time, fifty-six



## *HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*

years ago, he or one of his children has been in school, either as pupil or teacher. In 1891, his family moved into Brown's Chapel School District No. 31. In this school, Mr. Branch was a pupil until he was eighteen years of age, when he passed the teacher's examination and became the teacher of the same school.

W. A. Branch entered Ouachita College in 1906. Here he received training far better than he had known in the rural schools. He returned to Greene County to teach, with a desire to make a high school education possible for every child in the county. For thirty-four years he served in the county as teacher, county examiner, and county superintendent, always advocating consolidation of schools.

On September 25, 1910, W. A. Branch married Miss Beulah Diggs, daughter of John T. and Fannie (Lamb) Diggs, of the Brown's Chapel community. They are the parents of nine children: Lorene (Mrs. Vernon Williams), William O. (Buster), Frances (Mrs. Jimmy Walls), Edwin, James D., Walter J. (Buddy), Robert, Jean, and Ben.

W. A. Branch served as County and Probate Judge for four years, 1916-1920. He was County Superintendent of Schools from 1924 to 1926, and County Examiner from 1933 to 1940. The reward for his labor can be seen today in the improved consolidated schools of Greene County. Since March 16, 1940, Mr. Branch has been Postmaster in Paragould.

### D. C. EASTEP

Dennis Clyde Eastep, of Lafe, was born May 28, 1891, in the Ramer's Chapel community, five miles

## BIOGRAPHY

northeast of Lafe. His parents, Andrew J. and Elnora (Moore) Eastep, were also born in that community—his father in 1861, and his mother in 1870. His paternal grandfather, James D. Eastep, came from Alabama in 1848, and settled just in front of Ramer's Chapel Methodist Church. His maternal grandfather came from Tennessee about 1858.

D. C. Eastep went to school at Ramer's District No. 46 and New Home District No. 4, finishing the eighth grade at New Home, then called Slavens' Creek. He went to Walcott and to Halliday to Normal schools, and went to Conway to a State Normal in 1916. In 1917 he went to Quincy, Illinois, to the Gem City Business College. He was called into service in World War I on September 18, 1917, served in France and Germany, and was discharged in June, 1919. He taught school in Greene County for four years before the War and two years after the War. He began carrying the mail in the vicinity of Lafe on September 18, 1921, and still continues to carry the mail.

D. C. Eastep married Miss Belle Williams, daughter of Emzie and Maggie (Hampton) Williams, in 1919. She died January 1, 1924. On September 28, 1928, he was married to Miss Bettie Whitaker, daughter of Yates and Eudora (Harris) Whitaker. Her father settled at Lafe in 1856.

Mr. Eastep is a member of the Ramer's Chapel Methodist Church.

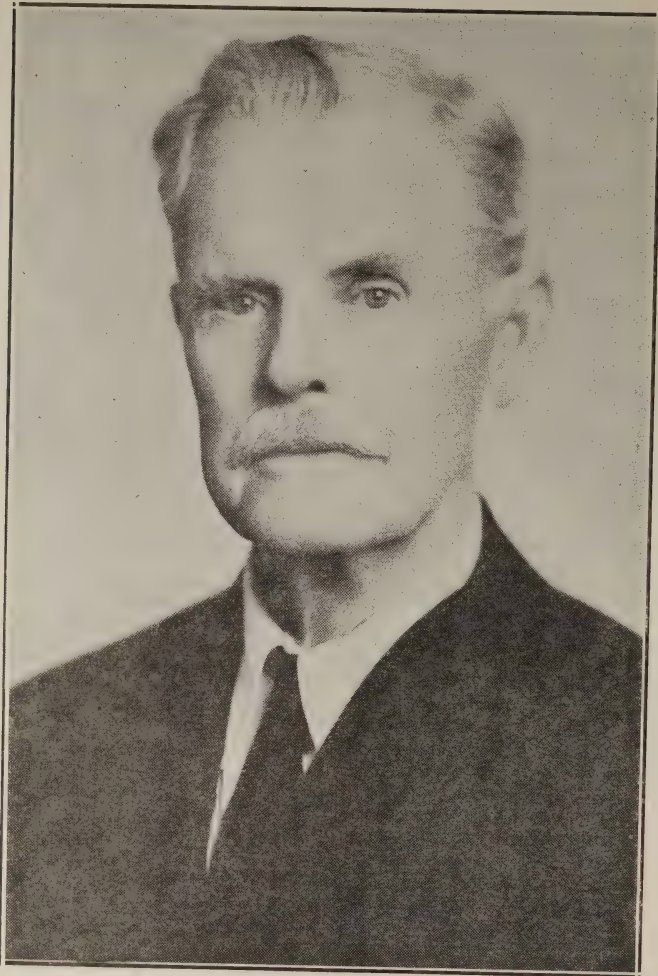
J. D. J. FAULKNER

Recognition is given here to a Baptist preacher who has spent the past sixty-eight years as an active

FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

minister. Now eighty-six years old, he has seventy-five living descendants, including ten children, forty-one grandchildren, and twenty-four great grandchildren.

John David Jonah Faulkner was born December 7, 1860, in Panola County, near Sardis, Mississippi, the son of Rev. Governor H. and Betty Frances (Mar-



J. D. J. FAULKNER

## BIOGRAPHY

shall) Faulkner. The family moved to Arkansas in 1874, settling about ten miles west of Paragould, near Crowley post office. Rev. G. H. Faulkner was a Baptist preacher who walked or rode horseback through Greene and Clay counties, and whose example was followed by his son, J. D. J.

On September 8, 1881, J. D. J. Faulkner married Miss Emma Thorn, daughter of Joel and Martha (Blair) Thorn. Within five months she had passed away. On October 29, 1884, he married Miss Texie Anna Weatherly, daughter of S. H. and Martha Ann (Valentine) Weatherly. Their children were: Ethel (Mrs. Tom Dollins), Governor H., Annie Frances, Grace (Mrs. Mark Hyatt), Sallie (Mrs. H. M. Dollins), Orman, Naomi (Mrs. Jess Pratt), Mary (Mrs. Tom Estes), Lona (Mrs. Hobert Smith). The mother of these children died April 27, 1902. On September 30, 1902, J. D. J. Faulkner married Miss Mary Rutledge, daughter of R. M. and Tabitha (Thedford) Rutledge. Their children were: Emma Jane (Mrs. Frank Clayton), Jewell (Mrs. Clifton Brewer), Ora Belle (Mrs. V. M. Yeargain), Raymond, and another son who died in infancy. The mother of these children died October 7, 1945.

Rev. J. D. J. Faulkner was ordained to the ministry July 25, 1880, at Union Grove Church, and had been preaching for about two years before his ordination. All of his ministry has been in Greene and Clay counties, except three years that he preached in Izard County, while he was attending Mount Pleasant Academy. He has perhaps preached more sermons, performed more marriages, and officiated at more funerals,



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

than any other minister in the history of Greene County.

### J. C. FORD

James Colman Ford, better known as Coley Ford, was born July 31, 1866, in Greene County, four miles north of Paragould, on the farm owned by his grandfather, S. P. Hoskins, who came here from Tennessee in 1850. J. C. Ford's parents were William S. and Sallie Ann (Hoskins) Ford. His grandfather Ford also came to Greene County in the early 1850's.



J. C. FORD

J. C. Ford's mother died when he was only six weeks old. He lived with his grandmother Hoskins and attended a little subscription school until he was eight years old. At that time, his father remarried and took him to Debois County, in southern Indiana. Here he lived on a farm, four miles from the nearest school. Although his opportunities were limited, he attended school until he was thirteen years old. When he was eighteen years old, he decided not to move back to Greene County with his father, but remained in Indiana, working on a farm for \$13 per month. He worked in timber and sawmills until he was married at the age of twenty, on November 11, 1886, to Miss Lula Patrick, daughter of Bryce and Harriett Patrick, of Crawford County, Indiana. Their son Ernest was born in Indiana. They moved to Greene County in September, 1887, and their other sons, Ross and Colman R. (Peachy), were born

## BIOGRAPHY

in this county. His first wife died in 1901, and for several years he was both father and mother to the boys.

J. C. Ford's second marriage, in 1906, was to Miss Ida Lambert, daughter of J. A. Lambert, of Paragould. They had one daughter, Louise. Mr. Ford farmed and worked for the Bertig Company until April, 1905, when he moved to Paragould and entered the insurance business. For ten years he represented the old line companies. In August, 1914, he organized the Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Company, of which he was Director, Secretary, and Treasurer. This company has been notably successful, and is well liked by all of its customers. Mr. Ford has done a great part in building Paragould, having owned about twenty houses and several business houses at various times. At one time he also owned 1,800 acres of land in Clay County.

Mr. Ford's third marriage was to Mrs. Minnie (Warren) Weatherly, daughter of Rev. David B. and Lula (Ford) Warren. Her father was one of the outstanding pioneers of Greene County, being a Methodist minister, a teacher, editor of a newspaper, and Circuit Clerk of Greene County for ten years. Mrs. Minnie Ford passed away February 24, 1946.

J. C. Ford has fourteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He is a member of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and Masonic Lodge, is a director of the National Bank of Commerce, and has been a member of the Light Plant Commission since its organization. He is also a member of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist Church of Paragould.

## *HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*

### LEWIS D. HANSBROUGH

Lewis Daniel Hansbrough was born October 31, 1904, in the Hopewell community, the son of William Jefferson and Eleanor Snider (Newsom) Hansbrough, who had come from Weekly County, Tennessee. He has three sisters: Berta (Mrs. E. M. Jackson), Mary (Mrs. Thomas Cable), and Eva (Mrs. Lyle Van Natta).

L. D. Hansbrough attended the Purcell school through the elementary grades, then went to Rector to school, and graduated from Rector High School in 1924. On May 23, 1929, he married Miss Vivian Mayo, daughter of Lewis and Elsie (Golden) Mayo, of Paragould. Together they graduated from Jonesboro College, Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1927, and both received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, in 1929. In March, 1933, both received the Master of Arts degree from the University of Chicago.

Mr. Hansbrough taught in the high schools of northeast Arkansas for thirteen years—eight years of the time as Head of the Mathematics Department of Paragould High School. He has also been employed by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in Paragould, and is at present Claims Examiner for the local office of the Employment Security Division.

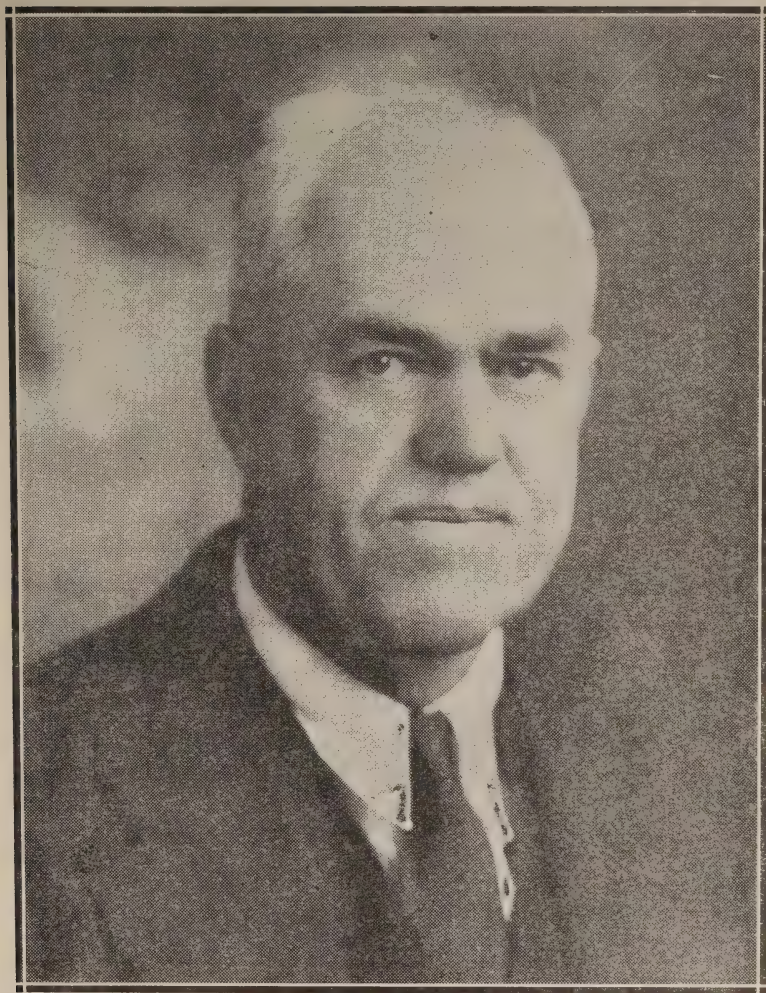
Mr. and Mrs. Hansbrough have two children, David Lee, born May 1, 1935, and Nina Carol, born December 22, 1937. They are members of the First Baptist Church of Paragould, and own their home at 119 North Seventh Street.



## *BIOGRAPHY*

### JOHN C. HONEY

John Claiborne Honey was born February 7, 1873, near Pine Knot, in Poland Township, Greene County. His parents were Thomas C. and Narcissus (Pillow) Honey.



JOHN C. HONEY



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Mr. Honey attended Thompson's Classical Institute for four years. He then taught in the rural schools of Greene and Craighead counties for the next ten years. On June 8, 1910, he married Miss Minnie Cunningham, daughter of Riley C. and Alice (Riley) Cunningham, of Paragould.

John C. Honey was Treasurer of Greene County from November, 1906, to December 31, 1910. For several years thereafter he engaged in farming and sold real estate. He was County Judge from January 1, 1921, to December 31, 1928, the only man in Greene County to hold that office for four consecutive terms. Since 1928, he has devoted his time to overseeing his farm, which is four miles east of town, near Lakeside School.

Mr. and Mrs. Honey reside at 730 West Locust Street, in Paragould.

### JAMES W. JOHNSON 1843-1927

James Washington Johnson was born October 31, 1843, in Crockett County, Tennessee, one of thirteen children. His parents were Isaac and Elizabeth (Elliott) Johnson. He entered the Confederate Army at the age of seventeen and fought to the close of the War. After the War, he went to Vanderbilt University, from which he received the M. D. degree. When he was twenty-five years old, he married Miss Mattie McFarland, daughter of a Methodist preacher.

At the beginning of his medical practice, Dr. Johnson would work his farm in the daytime and visit his patients at night. Gradually he acquired a large

## BIOGRAPHY

rural practice in Tennessee. In 1894, Dr. Johnson came to Paragould, Arkansas, where he practiced for many years until his health failed. He built up an extensive general practice, and was especially successful in treating infants.

Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Johnson were the parents of three children, Sidney, Ella, and Thomas, all born in Tennessee. Sidney Johnson married Mrs. Lora Lewis and has operated a general store at Carbondale, Illinois, for more than fifty years. Ella Johnson married Rev. A. C. Cloyes, a Methodist minister, who died in 1924. Although Mrs. Cloyes did not have any children of her own, she was a good mother to Rev. Cloyes' three children by a former marriage, Hubert, Lena, and Charlie. Mrs. Cloyes has lived in Paragould since 1894. Tom Johnson married Miss Lelia Head and had two daughters, Sidney (Mrs. Max Hall), and Helen (Mrs. Paul Peters). In 1928 he married Mrs. Maude Christian. Tom Johnson has been president of Johnson-Cloyes Hardware Store in Paragould since its organization more than forty years ago. He has four grandchildren: Tommy Jo Hall, Helen Ann Hall, Diane Peters, and Deborah Peters.

In loving remembrance of their father, the children of Dr. J. W. Johnson contributed this sketch. Dr. Johnson was a member of the Methodist church from early life. He allied himself with good causes up to the time of his death in 1927 at the age of eighty-four.

E. W. LITTLE

Elwyn Whitsell Little was born July 1, 1906, in the Center Hill community, the son of James H. and

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

Addilene (McIntosh) Little. He has two brothers and five sisters. On April 5, 1929, he married Miss Juanita Dacus, only daughter of Ollie E. and Alice (Lester) Dacus, of Magazine, Arkansas. They have one child, Kenny Elwyn Little, born October 30, 1941.

Elwyn Little was graduated from Paragould High School in 1926, and from Arkansas State College in Jonesboro in 1933. He has done work toward his Master's degree at the University of Arkansas.

Mr. Little taught school for ten years, nine years of the time being in Greene County. He served as County School Examiner from March 16, 1940, to July 1, 1941, when the office was changed to County Supervisor. He has been County School Supervisor since 1941. He is now promoting the largest rural consolidation of schools in Arkansas.

Mr. and Mrs. Little own and operate the Paragould Frozen Food Locker, the only establishment of its kind in Greene County.

Mr. Little is a member of the Kiwanis Club and the Young Men's Civic Club, and has always taken an active part in civic affairs. He and his wife are members of the First Baptist Church of Paragould, and own their home at 319 West Court Street.

### J. HARRY MCPHERSON

J. Harry McPherson was born December 6, 1875, in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, of Scotch Presbyterian parents, John Albert and Evelyn (Stevenson) McPherson, who had come from North Carolina.

He attended Southeast Missouri Normal School, at Cape Girardeau; then taught school at Cardwell,

## BIOGRAPHY

Missouri, for two years. In January, 1899, Mr. McPherson came to Paragould, and entered the insurance business. He was appointed Postmaster by President Theodore Roosevelt, January, 1906, and reappointed by President Taft in 1910. On retiring from the post office in 1914, he devoted his time to the management of a large tract of land in Greene County. He was elected Mayor of Paragould in 1922, was appointed Postmaster by President Hoover in 1930, and retired in 1935.

Mr. McPherson has served as Worshipful Master of the Paragould Masonic Lodge No. 368. He took the thirty-second degree in Masonry in the Little Rock Consistory in 1902, and became a member of Sahara Temple of Shriners in the same year. He was past Exalted Ruler of the Paragould Elks Club, President of the Rotary Club for 1922, and served sixteen years as President of the Paragould Chamber of Commerce.

He devoted several years' time and considerable money to the development of the good roads movement in this section of Arkansas. He was President of the Lone Star Road Club, which was the largest good roads organization in the United States in its time. He was instrumental in securing the Federal building for Paragould, and also instrumental in freeing the Hopkins bridge from a toll bridge. He has been a member of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist Church for sixteen years.

Mr. McPherson married Miss Corrie Covington, of Memphis, Tennessee, March 11, 1914. They own a beautiful home at 631 West Main Street, Paragould.



## *HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*

### RANDAL L. MITCHELL

Randal L. Mitchell was born in Crockett County, Tennessee, December 30, 1893, and came to Paragould with his parents in 1901. In 1914 he graduated from Paragould High School.

Mr. Mitchell first became a rural mail carrier, but remained in the employ of the Government for only one year. He then entered the employment of Trice Brothers, furniture dealers and morticians, remaining with that firm until 1922. The experience that he received during this time prepared him for his life work. For the following two years he conducted the Mitchell Furniture Company.

Since 1924, Mr. Mitchell has become one of the outstanding morticians of Greene County. He is head of the Mitchell Funeral Home in Paragould, is a licensed embalmer, and is considered by the people of the community as a thoughtful friend in time of sorrow.

In religion, Mr. Mitchell is a Methodist. Fraternally, he is affiliated with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, and the Woodmen of the World.

On August 23, 1916, Randal L. Mitchell married Miss Lucy Wyatt, daughter of Charles and Elizabeth (Morgan) Wyatt, of Greene County. They have three children: Richard, Ralph, and Louranda (Mrs. Houston Hollis). The home address of the Mitchell family is 200 South Fourteenth Street, Paragould.

## BIOGRAPHY

### MARLAN PHILLIPS

Marlan Holmes Phillips was born November 6, 1908, two miles southwest of Paragould, the son of Major Franklin and Sallie (Diggs) Phillips. He attended Pruett's Chapel School for five years, then started to school in Paragould. He graduated from Paragould High School in 1927, and attended Paragould Business College for one year. He started working at the Security Bank in August, 1929, and was there until December, 1930. On January 9, 1931, Mr. Phillips began working for the Paragould Water Company. He became Superintendent of the Water Works in March, 1934, and has continued in that capacity to the present time.

On October 10, 1936, Marlan Phillips married Miss Inez Barker, daughter of Edgar and Grace (Utz) Barker, of Paragould. They have two sons, Marlan Holmes, Jr., and Thomas Melton, ages six and three. Mr. and Mrs. Phillips are members of the First Methodist Church of Paragould. He has been Secretary of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist Church for twelve years.

Mr. Phillips is a member of the Rotary Club, was formerly a director in the Paragould Baseball Club, was Roll Call Chairman for the Red Cross one year, is a director of the Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the Swimming Pool Committee at the present time, and is also a member of the American Water Works Association and the Southwest Water Works Association.

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

### R. A. REYNOLDS

Rufus Arvin Reynolds, better known as "Red" Reynolds, was born September 27, 1895, just south of Fairview Church in Spring Grove Township. His parents were Elisha R. and Lou (Lewis) Reynolds.



R. A. REYNOLDS

He attended the Palestine school. His mother died when he was four years old. When he was eighteen, his father died. He and his brothers then came to Paragould, and he went to work for P. C. Ritter.

He served in the Navy during World War I, making ten round trips to France and England, nine of them being on the *Leviathan*, a prize ship interned from the German government. After returning home from World War I, he went back to work for P. C. Ritter.

In 1922 he went to St. Louis, where he worked on street cars. While there he married Miss Lottie Grace Williams, daughter of James Lafayette and Mariah (Wampler) Williams.

In 1926 he returned to Paragould, and, with his twin brother, Marvin, and half brother, Herbert Bland, went into the bottling business. This business, which started on a small capital, is now the Dr. Pepper

## BIOGRAPHY

Bottling Company, valued at half a million dollars. R. A. Reynolds has served as president of both the Northeast Arkansas Bottlers Association and the Arkansas State Bottlers Association.

Mr. Reynolds has been active in civic affairs, serving three years as president of the Chamber of Commerce. He is a member of the Young Men's Civic Club, the Rotary Club, the American Legion, and the Forty-and-Eights. He was instrumental in securing the gymnasium at the High School, the Ely Walker Garment Factory, and the Ed White Junior Shoe Company. He and his wife are members of the First Baptist Church of Paragould, and own a brick home at 400 West Court Street, in addition to numerous other pieces of real estate.

### L. V. RHINE

Lyle V. Rhine was born at Bloomfield, Nebraska, November 29, 1894, the son of Fred A. and Nettie (Cooper) Rhine. He attended the elementary school of Olathe, Kansas, and graduated from high school at Columbus, Kansas. Mr. Rhine received the B. S. degree from Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kansas, in 1917, specializing in apiculture and horticulture. He was State Apiarist of Kansas for two years, 1919 and 1920.

On August 7, 1920, L. V. Rhine married Miss Julia Gordon, of Columbia, Missouri, daughter of Carey H. and Julia (Long) Gordon. Her grandfather, John D. Gordon, donated the land on which the University of Missouri was built, and her uncle, Boyle G. Gordon, was the first Dean of the Law School of the



## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

University of Missouri. She received the A. B. degree from the University of Missouri in 1917.

Mr. and Mrs. Rhine taught school for one year at Stockton, Kansas, and two years at Hartford, Iowa. He received his law degree from Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee, in May, 1927. In September of the same year they came to Paragould. Mr. Rhine was principal of Paragould High School for three years, and Mrs. Rhine was Home Economics teacher during that time.

In 1930, L. V. Rhine entered law partnership with H. R. Partlow in the office he now occupies. He bought several sets of abstract books, which have developed into the Greene County Abstract Company. This enterprise gives full-time employment to six people, and handles a major portion of the abstract work of Greene County.

Mr. Rhine was president of the Chamber of Commerce for two years, and was influential in obtaining Crowley's Ridge State Park. He is a thirty-second degree Mason and a Shriner. He and his wife are members of the First Baptist Church, Paragould, where he taught the Men's Bible Class for three years without missing a Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Rhine have a nice brick home at 428 West Poplar Street, in Paragould.

### HARROLD SCOTT

Harrold A. Scott was born February 22, 1902, in Paragould. His parents were William M. and Mag-

## BIOGRAPHY

gie (Davis) Scott. His mother's father, Dr. John M. Davis, was the first doctor and operated the first drug store in Paragould. His father, William M. Scott, came here from Mayfield, Kentucky, in 1884.

Harrold Scott attended the Paragould schools, graduated from Paragould High School in 1916, and attended Parrish Business College for one year. He worked at the Paragould Laundry for the next nine years, and then bought the East Arkansas Lumber Company of Paragould. Four years ago Mr. Scott also purchased the Paragould Laundry and Dry Cleaning Company.

Mrs. Scott was the former Miss Thelma Ione Huddleston, daughter of Thomas L. and Mary Alice (Robertson) Huddleston. Both of her grandfathers were Baptist preachers in Greene and Clay counties. Mr. and Mrs. Scott have two sons, Tommy and Ronnie. Tommy married Miss Mona Jean Neel, and has a little daughter, Sherrell Kay.

Harrold Scott is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Young Men's Civic Club, City Water Commission, and is one of the directors of the National Bank of Commerce. He is also a member of the First Christian Church of Paragould.

### MRS. W. L. SKAGGS

Mrs. W. L. Skaggs was born and reared at Marmaduke, the daughter of James T. and Martha (Ross) Thompson. As a child she was given the name of Beuna Chloe Thompson, but many friends and stu-

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY



MRS. W. L. SKAGGS

dents know her as "Miss Dot."

On August 29, 1920, she married William Leslie Skaggs, son of Henry and Mary (Eaglebarger) Skaggs, of Jefferson County, Missouri. Mr. Skaggs was superintendent of Paragould schools from 1901 to 1907, and an outstanding educator in Arkansas and Missouri for many years. He passed away on February 22, 1936.

Mrs. Skaggs received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Ouachita College in 1920, and the degree of Master of Arts from the University of Missouri in 1924. She was the first woman in Greene County to hold a Master's degree. She has also done graduate work in the University of Iowa, George Washington University, and George Peabody College for Teachers.

As a teacher, Mrs. Skaggs has had a varied experience, having taught in all grades from the first through the twelfth, and in rural, village, and city schools in Northeast Arkansas. She was a teacher of mathematics and history in Paragould High School for eight years, and is now employed as teacher of mathematics in Walnut Ridge High School. Mrs. Skaggs was County Superintendent of Schools for Greene County from 1928 to 1933, and as such was the first woman to hold a county office in Greene County.

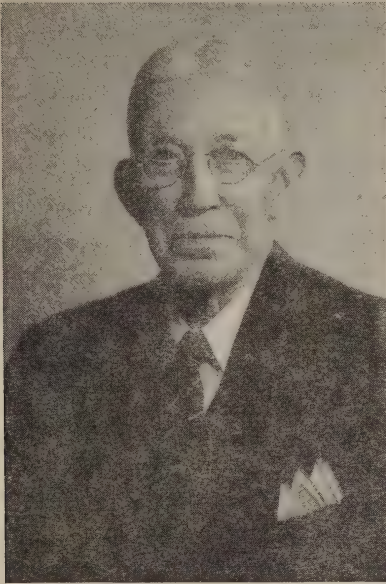
Although away from home in study or teaching much of the time, Mrs. Skaggs maintains her home and extensive library at 737 West Emerson Street, Paragould.

## BIOGRAPHY

H. S. TRICE

1853-1941

Henry S. Trice was born November 9, 1853, at old Greensboro, in Craighead County. His parents were Samuel and Sarah (Smith) Trice, who had come from Shelbyville, Tennessee, to Craighead County.



H. S. TRICE

Mr. Trice moved to Paragould in 1885. He was the first licensed embalmer in Northeast Arkansas, and established the first furniture store and undertaking parlor in Paragould. For twelve years prior to his death, he was president of the First National Bank of Paragould.

On February 18, 1873, H. S. Trice married Miss Margaret Ann Gambill, daughter of Aaron and Nancy (Logan) Gambill, of Craighead County. Their children were Ada (Mrs. A. D. Gardner), Will, Joe, Elizabeth (Mrs. J. M. Lowe), Ola (Mrs. Guy Adams), and Cecil. Mrs. Trice died in 1928. Mr. Trice passed away on August 12, 1941. At the time of his death, there were six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.



## *HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY*

### *J. ALFRED WALDEN*

J. Alfred Walden was born on a farm near Gainesville on January 11, 1887, the son of E. C. and Mattie (Russell) Walden. He received his early education in the common schools, and graduated from Greene County High School. During his early years, he resided on the farm, and made a full hand at any work demanded of a country boy.

Mr. Walden was engaged in teaching rural schools for a number of years, and served as Greene County School Examiner for two terms. He was a member of the Board of Education of the County for five years, and was president of the Paragould School Board for six years.

On November 11, 1908, Mr. Walden married Miss May Miller, daughter of James R. Miller, of the Oak Grove neighborhood. They have two children, Clifton and Orine. Clifton married Miss Vivian Hutson, and has two sons, Bobby and Billy. He is connected with the Walden-Blount Drug Company. Orine married Duard Stark, has two young sons, Dickie and Glen Alfred, and resides in Paragould.

J. Alfred Walden was elected to the position of County Court Clerk for the years of 1924-1928, and has served ably as County Judge for two terms, 1942-1946.

Mr. Walden and his family were members of the Oak Grove Methodist Church for a number of years, where he was Sunday School superintendent, and member of the official board. They are now members

## BIOGRAPHY

of the First Methodist Church of Paragould, of which he is Sunday School superintendent. He has been lay-leader for the Paragould District for several years.

In regard to service organizations, Mr. Walden is an active member of the Kiwanis Club, having served as president for the year of 1945. He is also active in the Young Men's Civic Club, and belongs to the Masonic Lodge and the order of the Woodmen of the World.

For many years Mr. Walden was engaged in the drug business, and continues to be a member of the firm known as the Walden-Blount Drug Company. He is also part owner of the Atwood-Walden Furniture Company.

In addition to these many activities, he is still interested in agriculture as a side-line. His home address is 344 North Sixth Street, Paragould.

### MRS. BELLE WALL

1878-1937

No woman has done more for Greene County than did Mrs. Belle Hodges Wall. She was a woman with vision and the determination to make dreams come true. She was secretary of the Paragould Chamber of Commerce for fourteen years. Among the outstanding achievements for Greene County during that period were the securing of Crowley's Ridge State Park at Walcott, the Harmon playfield and the Ely-Walker shirt factory at Paragould, establishment of a tourist camp at Paragould, and the promotion of annual Greene County harvest festivals. She was a

## HISTORY OF GREENE COUNTY

charter member of the Paragould Business and Professional Women's Club. As secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, she operated a local business men's credit bureau. She was a member of the First Christian Church.

Belle Hodges was born June 2, 1878, in Paducah, Kentucky. David D. and Ella Virginia (Settle) Hodges were her parents. The family moved from Kentucky to Paragould in 1882, when Belle was four years old. She was married June 5, 1900, to Ernest Wall, son of Dr. Calvin Wall, pioneer doctor of Greene County. Her son, Hodges Wall, was born August 13, 1907. He and his wife, Marguerite (Woodard) Wall, and daughter, Patricia Ann, now live in California.

Mrs. Belle Wall underwent an operation in December, 1936, from which she did not fully recover. After her death on June 21, 1937, plans went forward for dedicating the amphitheater at Crowley's Ridge State Park in her honor.

### T. R. WILLCOCKSON 1848-1925

T. R. Willcockson was born in Giles County, Tennessee, August 10, 1848. He was the son of Samuel and Frances (Gibson) Willcockson, the father a native of Virginia, and the mother of Kentucky. They were married in Tennessee, and there remained until October, 1851, when they immigrated to Greene County, Arkansas, coming through in wagons, and locating near the old Crowley farm, in Cache Township. Here Samuel Willcockson bought a forty acre

## BIOGRAPHY

tract, which was about the first deeded land in this section of Arkansas. He put up the first steam, saw and grist mill in Greene County, and ran this for several years. He also carried on farming, and being one of the earliest settlers, experienced all the hardships and privations incident to pioneer life.

T. R. Willcockson was but a small child when he was brought to Greene County by his parents, and here he grew to manhood and received his education in the common schools.

He was elected Sheriff and Collector of Greene County in 1880, and served for four years. He was appointed Postmaster at Paragould by President Cleveland in 1884. The Post Office was in the location now occupied by Jenkins Variety Store. There were only two postal employees, Mr. Willcockson and his daughter, Dena. In 1886 he was re-elected Sheriff, serving in that capacity until 1890. After this, he had a gin at Hornersville, Missouri, and one at Manila, Arkansas.

T. R. Willcockson was married December 6, 1868, to Miss Mary Bowlin, daughter of John and Mary Bowlin of Walcott. They had seven children: Callie (Mrs. Sterl Rousseau), Lucy (Mrs. Will Dennis), Dena (Mrs. E. G. H. Tankersley), Mack, Sudie (Mrs. M. M. McHaney), Nannie (Mrs. E. W. Stanley), and Holland (Mrs. W. T. Stedman). Of these, only three survive: Dena, Nannie, and Holland.

T. R. Willcockson died July 5, 1925, and Mrs. Willcockson passed away December 14, 1940.

























